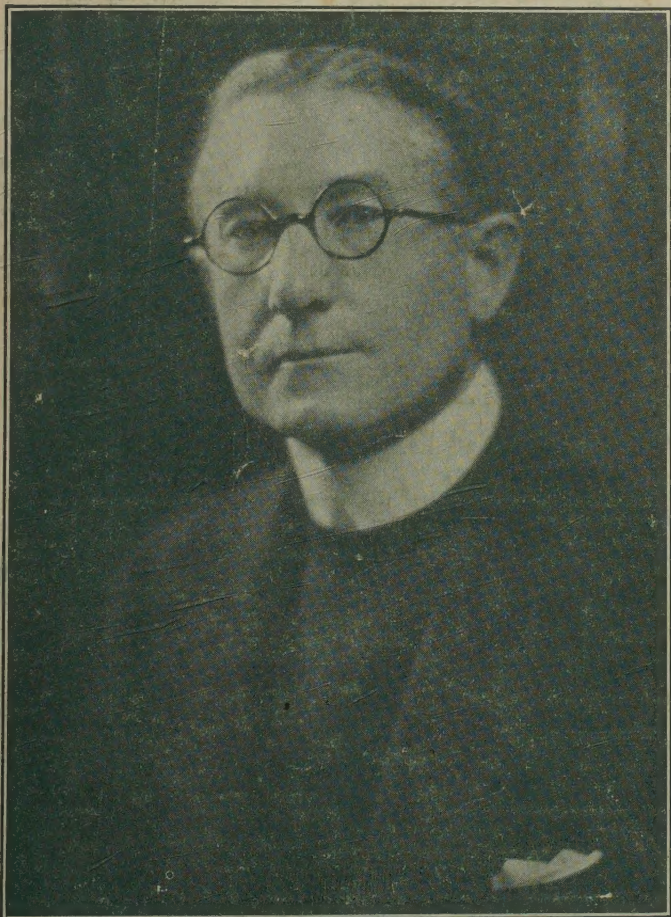


WILLIAM AUSTIN SMITH

A SKETCH

By CHARLES LEWIS SLATTERY

Illustrated by Nine Essays of DR. SMITH



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WILLIAM AUSTIN SMITH

*"He faced well-nigh insuperable obstacles; he
fought hard; and he won a glorious victory"*

WILLIAM AUSTIN SMITH

A SKETCH

By

THE RT. REVD.

Charles Lewis Slattery,
D.D.

Co-adjutor Bishop of Massachusetts

With Nine Essays by Dr. Smith

ILLUSTRATED

Those who knew William Austin Smith as clergyman, as editor of *The Churchman* or as friend found him a lovable man, courageous, of attractive personality and holding to a lofty standard of Christianity; but he was so reticent, so little given to self-advertisement that the full beauty and full strength of the character here drawn by his intimate friend Bishop Slattery will probably be a revelation to many.

Hounded through life by persistent ill-health, Dr. Smith was forced to decline conspicuous opportunities of public usefulness, yet managed by his will-power and faith to carry on his work in the Church for a quarter of a century after doctors had told him to give it up.

This story of his struggle and his victory, with the specimen essays and sermons which, as it were, let us hear the man himself speaking, is a fine record which his fellows and his Church will not willingly let die.

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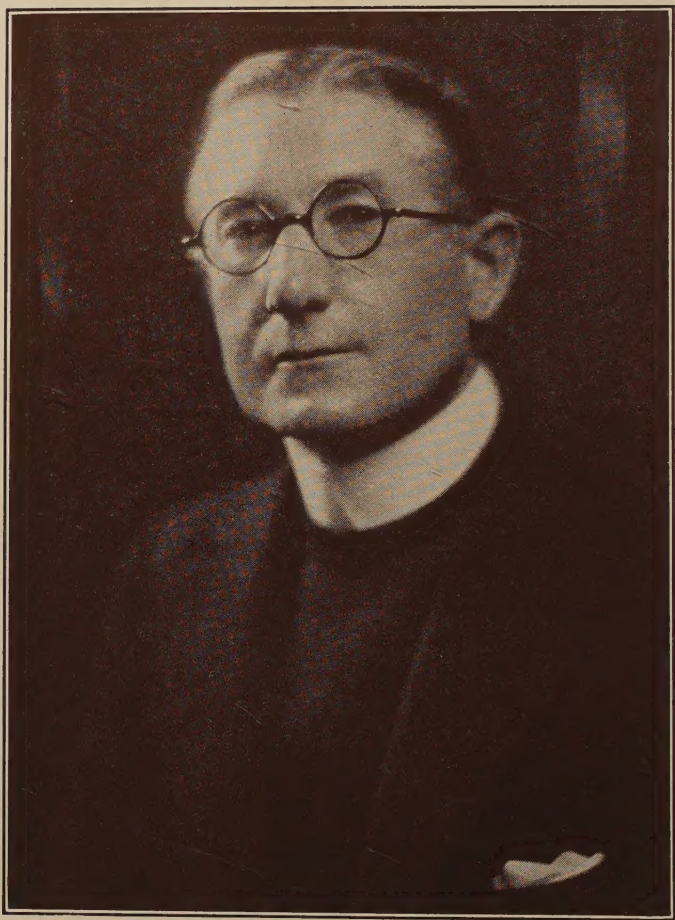
WILLIAM AUSTIN SMITH

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WILLIAM AUSTIN SMITH

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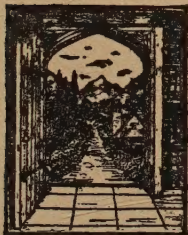
A Sketch

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ILLUSTRATED BY

NINE ESSAYS OF DR. SMITH



NEW YORK

E. P. DUTTON & COMPANY

681 FIFTH AVENUE

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PREFACE

THE reason for this book is the sacred request made in the letter which appears on page 78. I meant, in the beginning, to do only what I think William Austin Smith in his modesty meant me to do—that is, to write a brief introduction to a slight volume of his essays. But as I entered upon my task I quickly saw that I could not make clear the victory he had won unless I told in some detail the story of his life. The book, therefore, is a biography, but the specimens from his work are placed by themselves, so that the reader may judge for himself the character and workmanship of the man.

Fortunately, I have kept nearly all the letters which I received from Dr. Smith, so that my recollection of him is fortified by the letters of twenty-six years. When first I put down my memories, I simply made the record of a friendship, and, though in recasting this rough draft I have tried to make the account less

personal, I have not been able to take away all the more intimate parts. I am loath to do this, because these details tell the inner secret of the man; and, also, because the book is his children's, and they have a right to the true story and as much of it as can be told.

The essays of the book are Dr. Smith's own selection. Permission to reprint them is granted by the Editor of *The Atlantic Monthly* and the Editor of *The Churchman*. Out of a large output these essays are the words he would most like his children to remember. The only addition is one of his sermons, "Why God Pities Men." This sermon is left just as he delivered it, though he himself might have changed it somewhat for printing. I have thought that a book attempting to reveal the life of a genuine preacher would not be complete without at least one sermon, in the form of a sermon, recalling the finely cut, earnest face of the triumphant sufferer as he communicated to others his courage and his faith.

C. L. S.

DIOCESAN HOUSE,
BOSTON,
29 June, 1924

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WILLIAM AUSTIN SMITH

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WILLIAM AUSTIN SMITH

WILLIAM AUSTIN SMITH

A Sketch

I

THE CALL

I FIRST saw William Austin Smith when I became Dean of the Cathedral in Fari-bault, Minnesota, in the fall of 1896, for I found him a member of my congregation. He was twenty-four and I was twenty-eight; our ages being thus sufficiently close to ensure mutual sympathy and understanding, especially since we were both graduates of Harvard and had many teachers and heroes in common. He was teaching at Shattuck, the large school for boys, pursuing at the same time his course at Seabury Divinity School in preparation for the ministry. We seemed instantly to become intimate friends, taking each other for granted from the first. And the intimacy grew and strengthened through the

twenty-six years which followed till his death. He was my parishioner when our friendship began and he was my parishioner when he died; though the two parishes were fifteen hundred miles apart.

Through the two years when we both lived in Faribault I saw him constantly. We met for long walks together, and the talk was fast as we compared notes and reviewed our theological experience. He was often in my study also, and I passed over to him the impressions which I had received from the Cambridge teachers, Allen and Nash. He straightway studied their books, and thus felt that he was studying at the Cambridge School as well as at Seabury.

He told me of the boys he was teaching at Shattuck, and of his fellow-students at Seabury. With humour and pathos he reviewed their manners and customs. The boys sometimes came from unhappy homes, where divorce and remarriage made the children's life a hell. Smith was for such boys as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. The Seabury students were often partisan churchmen, and Smith was bored by their innuendoes and their sorting of the mint, anise, and cummin. He

would often report the sallies of these theological battles; as, when one grave man asked his friends at luncheon what were the seven sacraments of Seabury. When no one could tell, he answered, taking a sip of tea, "Five loaves and two fishes."

As our friendship passed into intimacy he told me of his boyhood and youth. He was of New England stock, counting Ethan Allen among his forebears. Born and bred in St. Paul, he had the good fortune to have in the high school a remarkable teacher, a Miss Gray, who recognized his sensitive nature and who held before him ideals of reading and of life which he quickly absorbed. Personally attractive, with innately gentle manners, with ready wit, he was popular among all the young people of St. Paul. His parents were Congregationalists, and he went to church with them, but he was seeking religious help in many ways. He read Emerson and quoted him. He heard many preachers, notably Dr. Crothers, who was then living in St. Paul. At length he entered the University of Minnesota, and after a three years' course he went to Harvard for two years, graduating in 1895.

Of all these varied experiences we talked,

but there was one experience deeper than all the rest to which he never referred. I learned it later through a friend of his boyhood. As a schoolboy he was threatened with tuberculosis. He was already, as a boy, filled with ambitious dreams of service; but this insidious disease made him think that he could not live to manhood. The tragedy was so sharp with him that even his characteristic gayety could not always transcend the depression. One day at luncheon he burst into tears. Only those who knew his secret guessed why his self-possession was broken. I have always thought that in this early facing of the deepest problem, he took account of the chief values in life; and the beginning of an inevitable process, leading to his call to the ministry, came in this rude awakening to the depth of human need.

In Harvard his religious aspirations and doubts were contending for the mastery. He did not know what communion he rightly belonged to, but he had an insistent longing to enter the ministry. He talked with his roommate whose religion was more conventional, and was warned by him that of course he couldn't think of taking orders. Smith had seen and heard Dean Hodges, and someway

gathered courage to go to him for counsel. To Smith's amazement and gratitude, Dr. Hodges gave him immediate encouragement. He saw the fineness and honour and devotion in Smith, and held out a welcoming hand. Soon after, in the dimly lighted chapel of Dr. Hodges's school, Smith knelt to be confirmed. He often told me what that confirmation meant to him: it decided his Church allegiance; it fixed his decision to be a minister of Christ; it opened the door of a rich and beautiful life given wholly to God. His room-mate refused to go to the confirmation, thinking that Smith had made a life-long mistake; but Smith laughed gently and joyously, for from that moment he was sure of his vocation, and through all the darkness and the light of the years which followed he never wavered. He had clearly received his call.

So it was of the past that we talked as well as of the unknown future. He was so good a schoolmaster that I thought he perhaps ought to be a schoolmaster for life. I wrote to my friend, the Rev. Endicott Peabody, about him, and received a quick answer. Smith wrote:

The Groton development is very alluring . . . The more I think of it, the more I feel convinced that

I ought to do school work. I may be wrong, and a little parish work might show me my mistake, but I feel strongly attached to the other life now.

As the last year in the Seminary began, calls came to him. The Rev. Harry Nichols, for instance, asked him to be his assistant, when he was ordained, at St. Mark's, Minneapolis. The Rector of Shattuck School knew this, and as early as the December before graduation, gained his promise to return to Shattuck to be assistant-rector with certain definite responsibilities. All went happily, and Smith made his plans to spend the Summer in England. Just before his departure, however, the Rector announced that he still wanted him, though he could not give him just the position he had offered in December. Bishop Gilbert at once came in to plead with Smith to continue his work at Shattuck, promising to make the Rector see the honour of his December pledge, and assuring Smith that he might safely start on his holiday. So Smith went off gayly with a friend for a bicycle trip in Europe. Returning in August, he found the catalogue for the new year printed with his name entered as chaplain with no responsible share in the administration of the school. It was the weak-

ness of an old man who at the last moment found that he could not relinquish his work, though he knew that he could not himself do it. Bishop Gilbert and others of Smith's friends were far away on their vacations, and Smith faced the problem alone. He was bound, as a deacon, to do what Bishop Gilbert commanded; and though the Bishop was all sympathy, every parish in Minnesota was filled, and there was nothing left for Smith but the place at Shattuck, now shorn of all its opportunity for leadership.

That August of 1898 was one of the tragic months in Smith's life. The letters which came to me told me how intensely he was suffering.

I can't tell you [he wrote] how hard it is to let go my hold. I did believe I could help things there, and I know I could have accomplished something if they would dare to let me try; but that is impossible now. I am beaten: so farewell to Faribault.

The Bishop is away, but I shall see him as soon as he returns, and read the law to him. I shall refuse to listen to terms of peace.

Then a letter followed his visit to Bishop Gilbert:

I have seen the Bishop! He stands for Shattuck.

He defends his course wholly upon practical grounds. My point of view is too idealistic to please him.

I told him I was willing to accept anything, but the Diocese is full.

Another letter followed on September 12:

I wish you were here, my dear fellow, that I might tell you something of the struggle which I have been going through the past week. I never knew that one could believe that he was doing his duty and yet suffer so many misgivings and doubts. Coming back here is the hardest, gloomiest task I could do, and yet I feel that the Bishop is right. God wants someone to do the work in Shattuck School. Why should not I make the attempt? I have tried to lay aside all thought that is personal, and, on my honour, I am asking God to show me the way and give me power. If I fail I shall feel that I have had the courage to enter the battle; and that is something, isn't it? Why should I not leave the future to God, and try the experiment. If I had left Shattuck and withstood the Bishop, I should always feel that there was one thing in my life that I had run away from.

I may be wrong, but I am trying to follow the light as I see it. I hope you will be in Faribault soon. I need you now. I am suffering.

It was clear to both Smith and his friends that his work at Shattuck could not long continue, so they sought a congenial opening for

him; finding it at length in a curacy in St. John's, Providence, which the Rev. Henry B. Washburn had just resigned. Dr. Richards, feeling from friendly testimony that Smith was just the man to be his assistant, sent him his photograph and asked Smith to send his. This humour pleased Smith: he knew that he would be happy with such a rector.

II

THE DAYS IN PROVIDENCE

FROM the first, the happiness of the Providence ministry was assured.

This is Friday night [he wrote]. I have been in Providence four hours, and I am happy already. Dr. Richards is charming, though he has but one eye and four daughters. His house is a dream of books and pictures—much mahogany!

His wife and daughters are in bed with the grippe so I am staying with the Junior Warden. The Senior Warden, who is just what a Senior Warden ought to be, dined with us this evening. I am beginning to feel that I am among friends who are interested in me, and I am pleased with everything and everybody, down to Mr. Hooper the Sexton. I believe I should rather be a doormat in St. John's than to dwell in the tents of Shattuck.

Tomorrow I have a secret session with my assistant, and then the work among the Gentiles begins.

My dear fellow, I am a low churchman in earnest now. Faribault is a hotbed of ritualism compared with St. John's. The severity of the "appointments" is chilling. I feel that even I have traces of Romanism about me.

This is a note. A lengthy epistle will follow after Sunday. I am full of hope for the speedy regeneration of Rhode Island.

'After the first Sunday the promised "epistle" came.

I have gone back into Egypt [he wrote]. I am spending my nights in frivolous dinner party dissipations, a veritable wine-bibber. But the people are so delightful and the atmosphere so "exquisitely refined" that I can't feel miserable about my sins. I can only sigh for righteousness.

My first Sunday in St. John's is over, and how I wish I could spend this morning with you as we did when we were boys together long ago in Faribault. Now for a bit of gossip. My first St. John's Sunday is over, and I am more than ever convinced that you are a rabid Romanist, and that your Cathedral is the Scarlet Woman! I was smiling internally all through the service yesterday as I thought of my appearance! Imagine me in one of Dr. Kedney's flowing robes—a black stole dangling Priest-wise in front, my legs occasionally thrusting themselves out at the congregation. Dr. Richards fainted at sight of my cassock, but my black stole acted as a kind of smelling salts to him and gave him strength to hand me a surplice. The ritual in the service is about as high as that in use at the Shepard (I am not certain of spelling of the gentleman's name) Memorial Church in Cambridge! The creed is said, clergy facing the people. The choir sit, as all respectable choirs ought,

outside of the chancel, dressed in the decent garb of laymen! I and my assistant sit each on a side of the chancel, facing the congregation.

The church is large and always respectably empty. There were not more than a hundred people in the congregation yesterday; "a goodly number," says Dr. Richards, "considering the weather."

I am longing to blow some Western wind into the sails! I see a hundred opportunities for work and am bursting with hope and confidence. The necessary duties of the assistant are not large, but of course there is an abundance to do if one will look for it.

The people are the redeeming feature of the place. They are making me feel perfectly at home. I think there are a number of good workers in the parish if only aroused. The Sunday-school is small. The Bible class for young men had two dyspeptic individuals in it, but in better days I am told, it was flooded to the extent of six.

I hope this note does not sound pessimistic. I do not intend it to be so. I love St. John's already. I am thinking only of the opportunities.

Write me volumes very soon. I shall keep reading your last letter till another comes.

I dine with a son of Bishop Clark this evening. More Egypt!

For the next two years Smith was almost always alone in the work at St. John's. Dr. Richards was so frail that he rarely did more

than come to the Sunday morning service, and then often took only a small part. For months at a time he was forced to be away, and one of the Winters he was on duty for only a fortnight. Dr. Richards became one of the most cherished friends of his life, and the Sunday evenings at the Rectory were both peace and joy to Smith. The chance for leadership denied him at Shattuck School came to him swiftly at St. John's. Instantly his charm and wit brought him friends, and he was constantly sought not only for dinners, but for visits, with the St. John's parishioners. He enjoyed the fine friendship so freely given, but he found in it more than pleasure: he was entering into the heart of the parish as a wise and loving minister. And he loved Dr. Richards, more and more each year, to the end.

The clergy gave their friendship too. Hoopes called at once, and Smith liked him. They took long walks together. Arthur Rogers and Aucock were very kind. Whittemore became "chummy." Dr. Rousmaniere he liked and admired. Washburn came down from Worcester to talk of friends they had in common: they became friends at once. "Atkinson," he wrote, "sent me a beautiful letter.

I know I shall love him. He says, 'I am no great sticks, but there may be a crack in your make-up for such as I.' I am going to make a pilgrimage to Boston soon." He went to Boston, and spent his time with Atkinson and Dean Hodges, to whom his gratitude went out always. The Senior Warden took him to see Bishop Clark, who obligingly let his wit flash for Smith's benefit. And Bishop MacVickar was to Smith everything that a Bishop should be.

I can't say [he wrote] that I had the grippe in an orthodox way. I protested all the while. I am well again and as yet see no signs of consumption or heart failure as a result! I was really sick for three or four days and had a temperature I could boast of.

Just at this stage of my letter Dr. Richards steps into my study from his adjoining apartment and recites to me a clever passage from Harnack's *History of Dogma*. I take great comfort in my Assistant. He is so easy-going. He constantly bids me take things comfortably. He would never tolerate the high-pressure methods of steeping the souls of the elect in religion, which were used in Faribault years ago when I was there.

I envy you your Lenten indulgences. You will see by my *Record*, which I shall dispatch presently, that we take Lent in homeopathic doses.

I am eager for the Tuesday night services. I am

alone on these occasions. Dr. Richards stays at home reading the Fathers!

At the present rate of Exodus, I shall soon be the senior clergyman of this Diocese. Tomkins, Rogers, *et al.*, are packing their trunks for larger fields of usefulness.

I dined with Hoopes and his wife Thursday evening. We shall soon be friends. I am going to Boston to the "St. Andrew's" gathering. I shall go to see Atkinson.

I am doing loads of reading—for the reason that my room is two doors from a splendid library.

Dr. Richards was always a kind critic of Smith's preaching.

I preached this morning [Smith wrote], and the Rector very highly approved. I won't tell you what he said. I took my text on "Pity" which you wearied of so. Had they been there, three thousand souls might have been added—but only sixty shaggy heads were visible from the box pews of this blessed St. John's Church.

I shall immediately develop those wonderful texts you send. "Peter's wife's mother" is quite to my liking. You are a villain! I am glad it is 40 below zero in Minnesota. We are having frightful weather with a wet East wind ever present.

I like Mr. Tomkins: he has the faculty of moving things. I admire Fiske too. He is the right sort of Ritualist, I believe. I am to preach for him Wednes-

day night. Joel 2:12 and Hebrews 12:6, are my texts.

My Young Men's Club is booming. So is my Bible Class. Please pardon my childish conceit, but I am your goods and I want you to know how brilliant I am.

I am trying to train a Confirmation Class and don't know how. I wish you were my neighbour. This week I must preach three times and meet a Confirmation Class and amuse a Boys' Club. It makes me cross. I wanted to go to Boston to hear Atkinson; but can't.

I swallowed Tennyson's *Life* in three evenings last week. I want Fitzgerald's *Letters* now. There are three articles in the *New World* for December which will interest you. Very heretical but very good! "St. Paul and the Church at Jerusalem" is one. "Harnack *versus* Harnack" another.

On March 13, he reported the Confirmation of the first class which he prepared:

Bishop MacVickar [he wrote] confirmed my class yesterday morning and I had the privilege of hearing his royal largeness preach. We made a grand procession, the Deacon first, very tall and stately; then Dr. Richards, ushering in three hundred pounds of Bishop. For once St. John's was filled. The service was beautiful, ideally simple and dignified. Oh, if all the world could be like us! I was proud as a hen with a new brood of chicks, for the class was all mine, and had had religion induced into them by

Western cyclonic methods. Dr. Richards said they were very well prepared.

This week I introduce an innovation into tranquil St. John's. I am to have a Saturday evening service, and a preparation for the Holy Communion. Granger is delighted. He and I are great chums. I don't in the least approve of all his methods, but he does as much work as all the rest put together.

Let me whisper a St. John's secret. This is our state here: Dr. Richards *versus* Granger; Granger impatient with Dr. Richards, thinks him too slow and old fashioned. Dr. Richards warns Smith against Granger. Granger trying to make a disciple of Smith. It's lots of fun! There is to be a tempest in our tea-pot soon. The boys' club, consisting of sixty or seventy little chaps, is soon to be without a manager. Granger wants to come back to the Parish House to help. Dr. Richards doesn't want Granger in the Boys' Club. Smith wants to run the Boys' Club, and Dr. Richards wants him to. Problem,—what to do with Granger?

You can scorn my chafing-dish methods if you wish. Thirty fine young specimens of R. I. manhood met with me last Friday evening, and each week brings back new sheep that went astray. I am happy!

The evening services are to be tried again. So you need not talk of lack of nerve. Several persons have asked me to begin them.

I am dreadfully busy! I preached three times last week: my ideas are fast giving out. Dr. Richards

grows sweeter all the time. I shall tell him to write you at once to thank you for sending me here.

Don't write me any more four-page letters. It doesn't cost any more to send three sheets.

Since St. John's was the oldest church in the city, the families longest identified with Providence were attached to it.

Have you heard [Smith wrote] how we are burying all of our millions at St. John's? John Nicholas Brown and his brother have both died within a week and been buried from the church. Huntington and Greer came from New York for the funeral. We have only funerals in this blessed place, no marriages or births. Granger and I dined together at the University Club last night and talked the sad prospects over.

One of my beloved vestrymen took me to Washington. I was away for two Sundays,—my assistant doing the work. I shall not have these days of luxury long, so I am making the most of them.

As he found organizations going forward conventionally he broke in upon them:

Tonight [he wrote] I meet the St. Andrew's Brotherhood, which died a year ago. I have new work for them to do. We shall not need to pray—but to work. I don't mean anything irreverent,—only it seems to me useless to gather the Saints of

the Church together to talk over our piety once in so often.

St. John's parish ought to be one of the biggest, liveliest parishes in New England. I wish I had more brains to work with.

Everything is moving along beautifully. I have started a teachers' training class among the younger teachers of the Sunday-school. I do the training. At our last teachers' club, which meets once in each month, I gave a "model lesson" at Dan Granger's request. It was a dreadful tax on my modesty, but I got through it.

Granger is a wonder to behold. Only he makes a clergyman feel very uncomfortable. He so thoroughly knows our business. But he seems to love me. I want you to know him. He knows about you.

Smith was ordained to the priesthood in St. John's in the spring of 1899.

The ordination [he wrote] was beautiful. Washburn and Hoopes assisted, and Dr. Richards and Bishop MacVickar did the rest, so I am no longer a mere deacon. Granger loves me more than ever now and will soon come to me for confession. Hoopsey gave a luncheon for me.

The Rector made me happy yesterday by telling me what my chances are of becoming a preacher. It is very gratifying to have so critical a listener satisfied with my raw attempts. This is my brag.

Smith's methods were not all easy and con-

fortable. One day a distinguished layman said that clergymen lacked courage; they never took a man by the buttonhole and told him his sins. How he wished some parson would face him and tell him all he saw! He evidently was not thinking of Smith as the parson. But Smith promptly asked, "Would you really like to know?" The man grew a little pale, and murmured, "Yes." Smith then fell upon the task. "I told him," he reported long afterwards, "that he was very unkind. I described to him the way he sat in a front pew and wiggled impatiently all the time Dr. Richards was preaching, so that Dr. Richards couldn't help seeing him. I told him brutally that I thought he had made Dr. Richards very uncomfortable for years, that he knew it, and that he had not cared." When asked if the distinguished gentleman was afterwards as good a friend as ever, Smith smiled grimly and confessed: "No, but I took that result into consideration in the moment when I was deciding if I would meet his challenge to us parsons. I made up my mind that he never should make that particular remark again."

So the months passed till the end of 1900, Smith doing the work of at least two men dur-

ing Dr. Richards's persistent illnesses. He was overwhelmingly happy, but on the night of December 7 he suddenly reached the breaking point. From Bermuda he wrote in the spring of 1901:

I was stricken down in full health and possession of my faculties. The day I was "struck," I did one of my fine day's work—studied in the A. M., called on the afflicted in the P. M., conducted a Boys' Club after dinner, and then from 10 to 12 went to a Shakespeare Club with the Swells. At 12 I came home with Dr. de Wolfe, whom you may remember. He came into my room to finish a cigar, when my pulse suddenly began to go up. He called in two more doctors and I *died*,—with a pulse of 220! All St. John's was scared blue because they thought their 'dear little Curate would leave them. For one day and night it seemed hopeless—but here I am, gaining three pounds a week and feeling quite capable. The disease: "Acute Kidney Attack." So now you have it, my dear,—and don't ask any more questions.

St. John's is a glorious old church. They know how to treat invalid clergy. I wish you had such a parish. I have some news for you. Mr. Greene, the U. S. Consul here, is an old St. John's man,—three generations or so with a grand picture or two of ancestors as vestrymen in their day. He confided to me the other evening that the vestry had pitched upon me as Dr. Richards's successor! A very grati-

fyng thing to know! This is a dead secret, so don't breathe it to anyone.

Paddock of New York, Bishop Potter's Anti-Tammany man, is here. He called on me yesterday and talked loud and long on New York vice. I liked him. Bermuda is filled with deans, canons, and such. I meet them at garden parties. It all seems like a chapter out of Trollope. Write soon.

Henceforth Smith dated everything from this collapse of his health. He could not forget it, though he seemed to be unconscious of its tyrannous memory. Even on that black, strange night, his humour stayed him. When Dr. de Wolfe thought him moribund, and sent first for one doctor to assist him, and then for another, Smith spoke up, as from the dead, "Better send for an undertaker."

But the Southern holiday and the love of St. John's gave him a flash of courage. And so in the spring he came back. With all the joy of a gracious parish, led by Dr. Richards, to greet his return, Smith met another tragic day. He wrote on May 4, 1901:

I can write only a line to you today, but I must write that. I am enduring with what fortitude I can the disappointment of another breakdown. On the first evening after my coming home, came another

serious illness and I am just getting strength enough to see people. I am trying to be hopeful and brave about it, but the future looks very gloomy in spite of all.

Now with regard to St. John's. The Senior Warden came to my physician to ask if I were strong enough to become the Rector. My illness answered the question. It is impossible from my point of view. My one thought now is for you. I have had two very satisfactory talks with the Senior Warden and with Mr. Dorrance with regard to you. I said all the nice things I could say and I know that you are first on the list. In a day or two when I am stronger, I shall write again and meanwhile, all must be "mum."

In the summer his friend was called as Rector, and while the question was pending, Smith wrote:

I took to dreaming dreams when I left you Wednesday. The inspiration came from that cosy chat in the de Wolfe pew in dear St. John's. May I tell you what I dared to hope for?

What would you think of St. John's, if I were to stir up a nice little pile of money to give us a free hand with the music, and the help of another assistant, and the promise also of extending the chancel as was proposed a year ago. What wonders we might do with old St. John's, with the best music, and three pious chaps under your pious leadership!

I would have to go South for four months, but

after that I should be in the best condition. I am practically well now. It is only the first winter that the doctors fear.

You have given five years to Faribault. Your work would be unfinished if you gave fifty. The useful man will always leave much undone. Wouldn't it be better for you personally to make a change just now? And what is better for you is better for the thing you are trying to do. I think so far as sacrifice is concerned there is abundant opportunity for it here. I appeal to your selfishness and mine in only one regard: what joy it would be to work together in the thing that enlists our enthusiasm.

This is only a dream and without committing yourself, please tell me how it strikes you. Of course I have not mentioned this to any vestryman here. I am certain that I could get the money for the music, and the chancel changes. Many have been eager for just that sort of thing.

May I make one more suggestion? Should I stay and you accept, would you object to the title for me of associate rector. You of course would be Rector in every sense of the word. The suggestion springs from vanity, and a possible help the title would be to me if I desired after a few years to find work elsewhere.

Be frank, my dear fellow, and say how each of my propositions strikes you. It is all very simple. The new thing about it all is the comfort and inspiration of two friends hammering together at the same problem.

His friend recognized the strength of the appeal but felt that he could not go to St. John's as Rector, and the dream of two intimate friends working together faded away. Smith's health was still so precarious that the parishioners who had sent him to Bermuda in the Spring of 1901, sent him to the Mediterranean for the following Winter. On February 6, 1902, he wrote:

Doubtless you are wading through snow banks knee deep at this season of the year,—while I am gathering roses within sight of Etna and the Straits of Messina. It is wonderful here,—too wonderful for anyone but a writer of guide books to describe.

I spent a few weeks in Italy and then came to Sicily, where I have been roaming about for four weeks. I hope within a fortnight to go either to Athens or back to Rome. I want to be in Rome at Easter if possible.

It is all very delightful,—charming people, diverting interests of every sort,—if things were less interesting, I should be sad indeed,—cut off from the work I love so well. I try to be brave and optimistic through it all,—but sometimes it is very hard not to give way to gloomy moods! I have been in the ministry a little over three years,—one year has been spent in illness! The sad part is the fear that I may never be well,—I can't quite see strength to bear that.

But I hope and pray for courage even to conquer that if it comes to me.

I wish I could see you and tell you all the St. John's history of the past few months. It was indeed flattering and gratifying to me to see how much I was wanted in Providence, how real the grief was at my going away. To the bitter end Mr. Vernon, Gammell, Dorrance, and all the congregation fought off the election of another Rector when it seemed that I might be well enough in six months to carry the work! But they did not dare to wait. My health was too uncertain and the condition of the Parish too critical! I tell you this because it does me good to have my few friends of the Cloth appreciate my sadly unfinished work.

He wrote again from Rome on March 24, having met Dr. A. V. G. Allen, who was spending the Winter there:

I met your friend Allen the other day and we spoke of you. He is indeed the right sort and I enjoyed hearing him divulge his opinion on the probability of St. Peter's having ever been a tourist like myself in Rome. He—Allen, not St. Peter—looked well and seems busy with writing and studying Italian. He is not alone in his linguistic ambition, for I too went so far as twelve lessons, and now ask for hot and cold water fluently.

Did you hear of the sad and sudden death of our good friend Mr. Vernon, St. John's Senior Warden.

Five 'days' illness,—pneumonia. Poor man. I loved him dearly.

I hope to be in Rome for another fortnight, then Florence and Assisi and Perugia and Venice. I am undecided about the Summer. Some kind and attractive invitations to come to England and Scotland tempt me,—but I feel that I ought to be home in July to look for a parish. I shall have to take anything that comes, for I have not the means to lie idle, and good churches vacant are not numerous! But I am humble and I shall be happy anywhere, I think. I am absolutely well now, the doctor says,—which makes me glad,—so I can enter the fight once more unfettered and I know my work will count for more in quality,—after my year of pain and trouble. Write soon and tell me that you think so too. I have had a sad and, at the same time, happy short ministry,—but I am not bitter and just as genuinely enthusiastic as ever I was.

On Easter Monday he wrote again from Rome:

A very charming parishioner of Mr. Paddock of Pittsburgh told me today that he (Paddock) is about to leave Pittsburgh. She said also, that I am just the man for the place. I don't know anything about the church,—whether high or low,—big or little,—so I may be aiming at something quite beyond my humble reach,—but you know Pittsburgh and I am daring to ask you to write a letter in my behalf to the vestry if you think it wise. Of course if it is a

large church, I suppose that I should stand a poor show,—though I could swing it if I had the chance. Do your best for me, my boy,—for I am a stranded parson through no fault of mine. My doctor calls me “whole”—so you need have no scruples as regards my health.

I saw the Pope today,—a sight well worth some trouble. Friday I go to Florence.

From Venice towards the end of April he wrote:

Two letters have come from you this week. It seems good again to see the familiar hand and fat envelope—and makes me believe that everything is as it used to be.

Venice is nice. Come and join me and take a rest from pulpit building and sermon doing! It is strengthening to one's soul to see the moon shine on St. Mark's and the Palace. I think I can never write another flippant sermon or throw words carelessly, after my spasm of pain and year of wandering. I wonder who will want to have me and where that next abiding-place will be! I have good friends who are willing to say the best of me, but no parish comes hastening along.

I should not be willing unless pushed by hunger to take an assistantship again. It must be a whole church or nothing this time. I can run a show as well as the next man now, and I must try to get the show. I am well now—thoroughly well, I think. If not, I shall cease to spare myself and work on till

the end. No more loafing and petting for me now! So, my dear fellow, send in my name for anything,—Bishop of Chicago, if you will—and trust my strength. Of course, I expect something very small and shall be perfectly happy in it, I know. If I have anything in me—it will come out—so I am not afraid of hiding my twinkling light.

At the end of May he was in London. He consulted a famous specialist, who warned him that he could never be well and must give up all thought of work. He did not confess the verdict, but the darkness was drawing down, as the following letter shows. Still he called for a parish.

This is merely an announcement [he wrote]. I am too weary to write you a letter—and you couldn't read it if I should. I sail for home on the S. S. *Commonwealth*—Dominion Line, on June 5th—arriving in Boston June 13th. I shall go direct to Providence and my address will be "The University Club." I am in London for only a few days to see the Exhibit at the Academy, and tomorrow I go to Shropshire to visit some friends—and have a taste of real English country life!

How glad I shall be to leave wandering and unpack my trunk and earn an honest living once more!

My love to you my dear fellow. I am too weary to write.

I naturally fell to work at once, and hearing that St. Paul's, Milwaukee, was vacant, I persuaded the Vestry to hear Smith preach in a New York church soon after his return. The next move was to persuade Smith to accept an invitation of our friend, Dr. Nichols, to preach in his New York church.

I am sorely puzzled [he wrote] and wish that you were here to help me! July 6th is all a muddle! I can't preach in Newport—because I gave it up. I think I shall go to Nichols and yet I don't know! What I shall do—I leave with you!

Oh for a home and any kind of work—just to be settled and at rest!

I am blue, my dear boy—I can't help it. I have much to worry me that can't be talked over—and why I take the trouble to bother you with it—I don't know. I think it's because you love me! Write or telegraph, if New York is right, for July 6th. Otherwise, a later day, but not in Berkeley, Newport. It's not the fitting place.

From Newport, where he was in charge of St. Columba's Chapel for the Summer, he wrote on the 8th:

My dear Earl of Warwick:—

I am indebted to you for St. Paul's. Sunday I preached, met the Vestry, took breakfast with them

in Providence on Tuesday, and received the "call" the same day. They seem enthusiastically eager to have me and I am charmed with what I have seen of them.

This morning I sat with the Vestry of Chestnut Hill, Boston. I must see you and then decide! My heart goes out to Milwaukee, which I understand to be only a few hours from Faribault. Together the West may be ours! When can we meet and let me hear your counsel? Can you visit me in Newport,—bringing two sermons for a Sunday in my chapel? I will let you hold Bishop Clark's hand for a season! I am chaplain to the American Archbishop. Please address all further calls you have for me to Newport, care Bishop Clark, 2nd Beach.

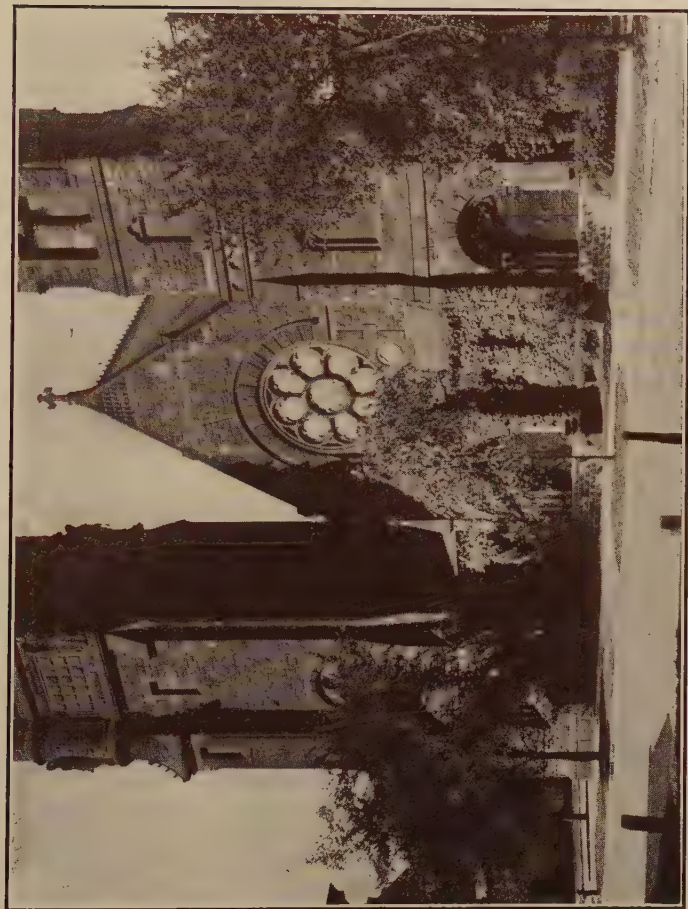
III

THE MILWAUKEE RECTORSHIP

EARLY in the fall of 1902 Smith was settled in Milwaukee. He found the wrench of leaving Rhode Island harder than he had expected; and he reported himself homesick. But quickly the gracious parishioners of St. Paul's gathered about him, and he was constantly writing his loyal appreciation of all that they were in themselves as well as to him.

The more I see of this great parish, the more I love you for putting it into my hands. A most unusual Vestry,—a full church, and a cultivated and enthusiastic people,—and a perfect plant,—and with all I am happy—or would be if I had the strength of a child. My tender health is a sad handicap—but I breathe the fact to no one. I shall do great things if God will let me stay well. I don't have many well feeling days, my dear fellow,—but I am able to work.

Everything is going beautifully, and I have hopes of a great work here. The people are more than appreciative and kind,—my youth does not seem to matter in the least now.



ST. PAUL'S CHURCH IN MILWAUKEE

St. Paul's is by all means the strongest parish of its Diocese, and had clung to a simple churchmanship, as the churchmanship of the Diocese soared above it. Its policy had long been to hold aloof from diocesan responsibility. Smith's generous co-operation was at once recognized, and while he led his prosperous parishioners to help the Diocese, the Diocese honoured him by making him president of the Standing Committee.

In the Spring of 1904 he was married to Miss Annie Breed Smith, whom he had known for many years. It was one of the marriages that seem inevitable, and deep and solid happiness followed it. In the Fall he wrote:

From the head lines of this paper one might suppose that I am seated in the Parish House with my pen in hand, but it's no such thing. I am housed in my own beautiful Rectory with my household gods about me in comfortable confusion. You can't understand the feeling, but Thurston and Sedgwick can, and they may be good enough to describe it to you.

The past month has been busy with things of this world. House furnishing, repairs, moving, unpacking, admiring one's lately acquired possessions, and occasionally speaking to one's wife, have divided my time among them, and what has become of the sin-

ners I do not know. Yes, I do, too; they are all busy attending the Diocesan Council and General Convention. In their absence the Kingdom moves along frictionless.

Have you any real Sunday-school wisdom, the transferable kind? I am trying to tackle the problem this year, and it's mighty depressing. I have two evil tendencies to combat. Our people are childless, and the few with offspring dread measles and small pox, things which go with religious instruction in Sunday-schools. So the few who have children, won't send them. I mean they wouldn't before I seriously set about the problem. Sedgwick did the business, but he is different and knows how.

I am re-reading Kidd's *Social Evolution*. What a masterwork it is. In Lecky's *Rationalism*, Vol. I, Page 170-173, there is an inference from Reformation history which ought to knock the Anti-Protestant movement dizzy. Witness the effect of Counter-Reformation in Catholic countries. I shall write to *The Living Church*.

When are you coming to Milwaukee? I will tell you of my honeymoon and vacation. Of the beauties of Lake Kennebago, of being alone with the deer and trout and the dear, with only a guide beside to fetch and haul. I will tell you of whirling through Portland and along the North Shore in an automobile,—of a trip through the Berkshires with only a canopy between us and the moon. I will tell you other things to disturb your bachelor complacency.

He now spent his Summers in a small house on his father-in-law's farm at Peabody, Massachusetts. Here, in good vacations, he stored up health. In September, 1906, he wrote:

It was mighty good to hear from you again. I had taken pen in hand several times during the Summer to write you, but somehow I never found more than four running hours of leisure a day, and it takes more than four hours to write a letter in vacation time. I have had a physically profitable Summer,—so the scales tell me, and my present reaction from the world and flesh is serving good sermon purpose.

I have had a good Summer in an out-of-doors way, living in the midst of eighty acres near Peabody. We kept house this time, in a charming old thing built in 1645. Then we had two beautiful trips in an automobile,—one through the White Mountains, the other through the Berkshires and down the Hudson and over Long Island.

I had an interesting day with Diman in Newport. Did you know him very well? I have tremendous admiration for him. He has been to England where he visited Illingworth in his quiet little country parish. The *Lux Mundi* people had just had a reunion. Shouldn't you have loved to be behind the curtain?

I have been enjoying Benson. Do you know the *House of Quiet*? If you are permitted in Faribault to read books on the Index, read *Il Santo*. It is

wonderfully strong towards the end. I have also been perusing Tolstoi and Ibsen this Summer. "Brand" has fine sermon stuff in it.

It is good to be back at my work again with my head crammed with plans for converting Milwaukee. Vacations keep my soul normal. I thoroughly approve of spiritual relaxation.

Will you ever consent to spend part of your Summer with me? I am planning a little colony for next Summer,—men like Diman, Nelson, and poor sticks like myself, to get together and talk for a week or so in some lovely spot. Would you come?

I wish I could write books. I am planning one entitled *Religion and Degeneracy*. What do you think of it as an antidote to abnormal piety?

Write me more often, and do come and see my wife. She is worth many pilgrimages, and she has ceased to believe you exist.

Not only his home and his parish were profoundly satisfying, but his friendships also, made as they were in the Diocese at large. He made firm friends with clergymen of the opposite school of thought from his own. Dr. Webb of Nashotah was so good a friend that Smith cast his influence for him when a new Bishop was to be elected in the Diocese, and Bishop Webb was godfather for one of his children. At Dr. Webb's Consecration, Smith

pleaded for a simple service, and his earnest wish was met.

Our Consecration is now a fact. Webb did as I asked him, and was simple. No copes and mitres except Nicholson's and Grafton's. It would have been a pity to have Grafton shorn of any of his grandeur. Really, he seems more like the real thing than anything I have witnessed in the line of ecclesiastical art. Webb wore the conventional dress. Anderson preached a very Protestant sermon, on the function of the pulpit. Did you get your invitation? Webb sent one.

Mrs. Smith and I have revelled in bishops. Anderson and Osborne stayed with me; and, after the Consecration, Anderson, Osborne, and Weller came and smoked my cigars in my study and talked it over. I was deeply impressed with the attitude of Chicago.

Professor Fosbroke of Nashotah was also a trusted friend, and Smith urged his name again and again upon Eastern friends. Now he pleaded that he be asked to be a professor of Hebrew at the General Seminary, again to speak at the Church Congress. Dr. Fosbroke was often the Summer preacher at St. Paul's. Smith admired his fine type of academic preaching.

During this Milwaukee ministry, Smith met the hardest grief of his life. His beautiful little daughter, Mary Estey, only five years old, fell ill one Ash Wednesday morning and was dead before night. The sorrow was so overwhelming to both, that he and his wife could not speak of it even to each other. The radiant child's portrait was the centre of his home ever after. The gentleness of his parishioners bound him more than ever to Milwaukee.

In January, 1910, he was called to Grace Church, Providence. Two great desires stirred within him. Providence was his first love in the ministry, but Milwaukee had been unspeakably good to him.

It is horrible,—[he wrote] this trying to make up my mind. My friends there who tried so hard to get Grace for me, Fosbroke, Dr. Richards, Dewart, urge me to come, believing it to be the great opportunity for me to show myself. That of course is the Eastern view point. The West doesn't count. But, down at the bottom of my heart, I have the fear that my going to Providence is the usual conventional, worldly move. The Bishop, Morehouse, and the people here outside St. Paul's, tell me I have done more than any clergyman who has ever been here. That may be the usual *post mortem* eulogy, but St.



MARY ESTEY SMITH

From a portrait by F. W. Benson

Paul's is just beginning to be what I have prayed to make it. So I am tossed about in my mind.

Do tell me why you think I ought to let Providence go. I want to go East eventually. I am 38 and ought to be going soon if I am to go at all. Providence is a great opportunity for the ambitious parson, but I hate that phase of it. So let me have your mind.

While the question was pending, he had so sharp an illness that he sought expert counsel. He had worked with energy and skill in St. Paul's for eight years, daily conscious that he had been warned that work meant death. It was like a glorious miracle to him that he could drive himself to overcome the sense of weakness. It was God alone who upbore him. But now he was to repeat the tragedy of Providence.

I have not recovered [he wrote] from the illness in Boston and my failure to get my strength back compelled me to face squarely the question of health. A week ago Saturday I consulted a specialist in Chicago and got my sentence. I am never to go into the chancel again, he says. That is too hard to face at once, but I am complying to the extent of giving up here. The Vestry wanted to give me a two years' leave—but the parish must have a leader at once. I need not tell you how heavy my heart is. We shall go to Peabody at once to remain till Autumn.

St. Paul's is a truly great parish with the most wonderful service. It is ready to do great things.

Once more his country home was to be a haven of peace, but the sorrow of no work gnawed at his heart. He was never so filled with eagerness to preach. As he read, as he brooded, he found thoughts which he longed to give, through his own experience, to others in deep trouble. Then came the memory of the verdict; never again could he stand in a pulpit.

My frail tabernacle of flesh, as saith the Scripture [he wrote to Hoopes], was evidently not intended for the hard drubbing which the ministry has been pleased to give it. So I have limped off to the retired list. Perhaps some of you parsons, as you are wading through the Spring rains to Lenten services, may envy the man tucked away on the shelf. I have a large stock of sermons which I am offering for sale. You had better bid quickly, or I shall let Dr. Fiske of St. Stephen's have them. I have decided to sell my voice to B—— and close out.

In the Fall he took his family to Paris for the Winter. I was beginning my work in Grace Church in New York, and he wrote from the boat that, since it was impossible for him to work, he would have the joy of living in

the work of his friend. I wonder how many of us could have been so free from bitter thoughts, sailing away to idleness while his friends were buckling on the armour for a new year of the great fight! He never seemed to his friends who knew, finer or greater than at that moment. It was like an heroic death.

IV

THE YEAR IN FRANCE

IN May he wrote from Peabody with courageous bluff:

The days are wonderful here now; and I quite pity clergymen with good health who never get banished into heaven.

During the Summer Smith consoled his uselessness, as he called his enforced idleness, with articles for *The Atlantic Monthly*.

I have been celebrating with my class [he wrote] our quindecennial and I broke my fast of idleness by making a speech. I have also committed an essay which *The Atlantic* has accepted with enthusiastic praise that staggers me: "The Seven Worst Sermons." I want your honest criticism when you read it. It has been passed around among the parsons here and they flatter me with praise of its constructive note. But I want to earn your commendation. I am at work on an essay on "The Comic Spirit in Religion," suggested by Meredith's essay on "The

Spirit of Comedy." Sedgwick was apparently greatly taken with the idea.

You perhaps know that we have a dear little girl born in May. Anne and little Anne are doing wonderfully well. She is not taking the place of the one who has gone but she helps to make life seem a little less tragic. We never speak of dear little Mary Estey, for that is our way of making the loss bearable, but every hour the vacancy is there and the broken hope. But, my dear friend, I know more of the goodness of God since she left us than I did before.

We sail in October. Our movements will depend upon the Walker-Gordon milk supply and climate. Just now it looks as if Paris might be favorable for the winter. I shall read and try to write a little, and then I hope, after a year, I can take some work that needs me. I am bursting with sermons. A still-born sermon is a terrible thing.

Later, he wrote:

This essay business is worthless, but it has kept me from getting too utterly blue during my idleness. You don't know how badly I wanted to go to Providence. And yet I doubt if I should have gone. The Milwaukee work was really bigger, even if easier. But I am getting discouraged about my future. These breakdowns, I fear, will keep me from getting a church again. Vestries are afraid of "delicate clergy." However——

On November 21, 1910, he wrote from Paris:

The Paris life is going well. We are comfortably housed, and I am finding time for reading as well as the sights. France is seething with interest, social and religious. I hope to get to understand a little of it. In spite of the bombast of the anti-clerical government and press, the nation is devoted to the Church. All Saints' Day the Madeleine was crowded to the doors, as many men as women. The churches are packed on Sundays. Perhaps the struggle for existence is a good thing for religion. I believe the struggle through which all the churches are passing will be a testing time and will prove tremendously invigorating. We have yet to fight our hardest battle with Paganism and to win our finest victory. If only we fellows can keep convinced that Civilization without the Gospel is tragic.

Do you know Bodley's book *France*? It is the best work on modern conditions here and well worth owning.

I find Dr. Morgan of the American Church very gracious. I preached for him on Sunday. Do you know the church? It is beautiful, and perfect in its equipment. There were some old St. John's [Providence] friends in the congregation.

How I shall love to walk and talk and talk and walk with you. I am full of convivial religion and I want to let it out on some congenial pal. Sometimes I get discouraged and blue and then like the "Sun-

shine Club" I count my blessings and work off my discontent in hoping great things of my friends. I envy you your great work but I take it out in praying for you.

A New Year's letter followed in due time:

A happy New Year to you and Grace Church. I thought of you many times Christmas and whistled to keep up my spirits. We had two of Anne's family come over to pass the day and a few weeks following with us—but Christmas must be manufactured for oneself if one is to have it in France. New Year's Day with its riotous frolics is the great day. There was a beautiful service at the American Church, and the Benediction in the Roman churches Christmas afternoon is wonderfully touching. I may have said, already, that the churches seem always crowded with devout congregations—and by no means feminine. French Catholicism is more winning, far, than Italian.

We love our apartment and shall continue on till Spring. The children are quite as comfortable here as they would be at home, so we shall let well enough alone. As luck would have it, we hear of many friends in Rome. John Diman and his sister are there. Here we read and walk and rest with good long, undisturbed evenings—such as the busy city parson dreams of when he is hurrying off to dinners and to meetings.

I know you didn't like my "Seven Worst Sermons." You thought it flippant and a bit irreverent—laying

rough hands on a hallowed institution. You are right in one way. Only, on the other hand, there was in the thing—and I want you to see it—a great contention and faith. The performance wasn't trivial or superficial, I want to believe. It hurts me to have people say "tremendously clever" or "brilliant" and not see that it is "religious."

By the time you open this letter, and perhaps long before you have deciphered it, the House of Bishops will have A. and B. Am I wicked?—I pray for A. and leave Providence to deal unassisted with B.

If you hear of a "job" willing to trust itself to me, say a word for my character. I can come home if necessary before July. If New Haven, Springfield, or what not, should be unfortunate enough to be vacant still—say I am capable.

Later in January he wrote:

We have just had a beautiful two weeks in London—four churchgoings on Sundays—Scott-Holland and Campbell on the same day. The former lacks humility and madness, and the latter needs a dash of manliness in his face. But he has the preaching devil in him.

I wish the Church of England knew how to handle those big congregations in St. Paul's and the Abbey. Bad hymns and no congregational singing. I thought of the morning service in Grace Church with its glorious music. To-day I witnessed the reception of M. Duchesne, the Catholic historian, at the *Académie Française*. Thrilling to see the forty im-

mortals *en masse*. I am learning to love and admire this people. I am working hard, too, at their language—frivolous reading some of it, but a pleasant pause in my theology. Tell me what you are reading. I want to take some books to Biarritz next month. I am now cramming with French history and politics—no theology. I liked the *Disraeli*.

We are looking forward to a quiet sunny Spring on the Southwest coast of France, where we hope the children can play out of doors and I can sit on some over-hanging balcony and read.

Dr. Morgan of the American Church is using me for preachments. He is very courteous and a great favourite here. I think him an exceptionally strong preacher—but I find I am not a judge.

If ——— doesn't take Springfield or they don't take him, I would hurry home if they wanted me. I am itching for work.

Love to you, old man, and my wife, who is partial to you, joins me in it.

On February 5, another letter followed:

I too have been preaching to-day, with Rainsford in the front pew, and next Sunday I have another try at the American Church. I use old sermons and I find it no exertion. One doesn't know the joy of the parson's life till he is silenced. Each morning I think of being one day nearer a church again. If God will only let me have another try!

Did I tell you how much I enjoyed "assisting" at

the reception of M. Duchesne in "The Academy"? He gave some delightful thrusts at the Vatican in the spirit of the old Gallicanism—not yet dead in France. Next week I hope to hear Bergson lecture. He is tremendously popular. One has to wait an hour to get into the lecture room. James' disciple has his master's grip on the present. I see *Le Rire* quoted in the current *Hibbert*.

Mrs. Sturtevant and her daughters were in church to-day. Bishop Clark's daughter, you know.

On March 22, he wrote from Biarritz:

We came down here a couple of weeks ago to get some early sun and to play in the sand with the children. It is bright and cheerful. We have the consolations of religion in the little English church just outside our balcony. A likeable vicar who plays a good game of golf and worries not overmuch about the hastening of the Kingdom. I play a little golf with a wonderful view of the Pyrenees crowning the links.

We go back to Paris for May and then to Holland for June and July—sailing for home on the Rotterdam July 22nd—giving us a little Summer on Mt. Pleasant. Why don't you strangle ——? This licking the boots of the Greek Church to get our Orders recognized! Better send missionaries to convert it to Christianity. Still it is pleasant to know that —— met the Emperor.

Still in Biarritz, he wrote on April 13:

We have just had two glorious days in the vicinity of Pau. The sun was good enough to shine after a fortnight of clouds and to let us see the snow-white range of the *hautes Pyrénées*. Lourdes was so peaceful, so beautiful. I felt none of the repugnance and commercialism slapping one in the face, which Zola prepares one for. I wanted to cry when I saw an old woman in mourning doing the "Stations" with her blind son. Such eyes, such suppliant faces! It may be what Lamb calls "false consolation," but I felt ashamed to have complained.

We shall be home July 1st and have the long Summer in the country. I hope you will not be too far away.

Already I had mentioned Smith's name to my old parish, Christ Church, Springfield, which still remained without a rector, and the vestry were waiting to have a glimpse of him in some neighboring parish.

You are a dear! [he wrote] It all reminds me of ten years ago when I was over here and you were guiding the St. Paul's Committee.

My wife says she thinks asparagus may be as easily carried to Springfield from the farm as to Worcester. So that settles it. I can confidently stand by your agreement about my accepting if called—with two reservations. First, in my talk with

the Vestry, I might scent some impossible situation. It is most unlikely, for you stand sponsor for them, knowing us both. Secondly, I really know nothing about the parish, and, upon investigation, the physical burden might frighten me into a simpler task. You have probably considered this, too, so neither contingency is likely.

My essay, "The Comic Spirit," comes out in *The Atlantic* soon. I hope it doesn't queer me.

Soon after landing in America, Smith preached in Trinity Church, Hartford, one July morning. That afternoon he wrote:

They have gone and done as you commanded! All the Vestry were here. The formal call will come in a day or two and I shall say "Yes." I love you for it all.

Remember me sometimes. It is a great joy to begin my work again, and I try never to think of the shadow that is over it all. I know from every point of view that I ought to take up the work again.

Before beginning at Springfield, he fell back upon the restfulness of his Peabody home.

He was writing and planning, and eager for the fray, quite as if he had the normal amount of strength.

Thank you [he wrote] for your letter regarding my article. I am always afraid of your criticism—

which means that I value it. You are doubtless right about laughter and our pomposities. I think laughter in connection with God was an unfortunate word when one meant to convey more than the laughter of joy. The Comic element I intended to describe is largely an intellectual affair—a sense of incongruities, etc.—brain laughter, not heart—but I muddled my work of definition. Your suggestion that there be a stronger emphasis on laughter as part of God's pity and sympathy I like too.

The thing is too glaringly "smart." I cut out so much that I had left on my hands only the sparkling valuables and one can see that the author was rather proud of his gems.

I had a charming note from Crothers, but Dr. Richards felt that there is a danger in my kind of writing. I know he is right.

V

THE SPRINGFIELD RECTORSHIP

ON the first Sunday of October, 1911, Smith began his Springfield ministry.

Here I am! [he wrote]. Mrs. Smith comes tomorrow and the life begins. The house when I stepped into it this afternoon was in perfect order. One of our maids came Monday, and we were saved the chaos. It is going to be beautiful. I think you will say that the "sun-room" is the prettiest in the house. I have my desk and tools in it and the room just behind is lined with books so that the two together make a charming study. The living room is awfully attractive too. You were a good boy to leave us a rectory.

The organ is not ready but I felt we ought not delay any longer, so on Sunday we open.

I know you will think of me!

The response was instant. His preaching was recognized as unusual in its reality and appeal. He had gone through the depths, and he knew the consolations of God. He spoke

with authority, and he had a congregation which loved preaching. He was also a good pastor, but the interruptions came time and again, as his strength failed to measure up to his willing spirit. Fortunately, Donald Alexander, who had been in the parish for several years, continued loyally as the assistant to the new Rector, carrying his full share of the burden, and then doing all he could for Smith himself. The people recognized Smith's ministry as a great ministry, and they still feed upon the sermons which he preached to them. He gave them his best, and they understood.

Another heavy sorrow came during the years in Springfield. Another daughter, hardly more than an infant, died here. This sorrow (like the first) came in Lent. It was hard to speak of it, but he wrote:

Your love is a great help. I thank you more than I can say. We go home this afternoon and I shall take up my work to-morrow. I wish I had more "body" with which to face Holy Week and Easter, but I shall get through. I am thinking only of Mrs. Smith now, and she is trying to spare me. So our love helps us through. There are other things in store for her, harder yet, of which I dare not think—but she is, Oh, so wonderful!

My love to you, and pray for us!

He worked on, preaching with a deeper sympathy, and awaking a still deeper response in his people. The strain under which he forged ahead was evident sometimes in impatience with others, especially when he thought them narrow or sentimental. His quick temper was ordinarily vented in some jest which did not wound, but his wit was a perilously sharp weapon when he was aroused to let himself go. Then followed the vain wish that he had held his tongue. Mrs. Baxter of Springfield recalls that one Easter-even Christ Church was being decorated for Easter-day, and the Rector was looking at the lilies as they were brought in. He noted that on some of them were cards on which it was written that the plants were to be called for on Monday. Smith asked what that meant. When he was told that the plants would be taken by those who had given them to be placed on the graves of relatives or sent to sick friends, he flashed: "Oh, no! they can't do that. They have given them to the church. Take the cards out." In a few minutes he returned, and said very quietly: "Leave the cards. Who am I that I should make them unhappy." There was always this quick repentance after his impulsive outburst. He did

often hurt people because he said the frank word, revealing motives and judgment; but he was quick to seek forgiveness—and he was forgiven.

A certain parishioner, rather more interested in social life than in things religious, rented a pew directly under the pulpit. She seldom came to church on Sunday, though she never failed to be present at a guild meeting on Monday afternoon. Smith visited the guild each week and invariably greeted this particular lady with the remark, "I did not see you in church yesterday, Mrs. Blank." Mrs. Blank always had an excuse which was duly presented. So the weeks ran on till the poor woman exhausted all her excuses and felt obliged to come to church, in order to avoid the Rector's bland enquiry. So she came, and at the following guild meeting, met the Rector with the triumphant announcement: "Mr. Smith, I was in church on Sunday." "Ah," said Smith, "how flattered God must be!"

In 1915 the struggle against ill-health was evidently growing desperate. He smiled and had his old jesting gayety, even when he received his friends in his bedroom, but it was hard to conceal the discouragement.

Thank you for your "good morning" [he wrote]. I take it that the hope expressed that I am "perfectly happy" in bed is merely a rhetorical wish—an epistolary dash. As such I let it pass. But I am not happy in bed, even though I sound no laments on my housetop. After fourteen years—this gets to be a tragic story. In spite of your jovial letters, I suspect your imagination tells you so.

Some day I shall tell you, perhaps, under what régime I contrive to do the little work I do.

On Easter day, 1915, he came to his decision and considerately wrote to Alexander, his assistant:

I am sending my resignation to the Vestry to-night. I wanted you to hear of it from me, and will you be so good as to tell Miss Blackfan and Mrs. Brown, asking them to say nothing about it to anyone as yet.

On May 30, 1915, he preached his last sermon as Rector of Christ Church, Springfield. He had been convinced by his doctors that he could not longer keep up the fight. He knew that he had served his last parish. What his work might be he did not know; it could not be the parochial ministry, which above everything else he loved.

The night before that last Sunday he wrote:

My family has fled, and the Rectory looks desolate. I am sitting by my study fire and to-morrow is the last. So here endeth the Second Lesson! It has been beautiful in spite of all, and there is a great peace in my heart. So good night, my friend—and let me send you a little good-bye “thank you” for this nice Rectory and my three years under the eaves of the church.

He went away to his farm at Peabody, where the diversions of a gentleman-farmer kept his mind more or less occupied. His friends came to see him, and he discussed with them questions of Church and State. The War was a constant nightmare, and he refused to expect any good out of its awful sacrifice.

Donald Alexander, who had been assistant-minister in Christ Church, under three Rectors, and had won the gratitude of them all, resigned his post a few months after Smith went away. He wrote to Smith announcing his last service as minister-in-charge, and promptly received this letter in return:

I am glad to hear about the last chapter of your Springfield existence. You have done a work there which will be a lifelong satisfaction, and that after all is the whole thing.

That was fine and touching to have thirty of the boys at the Communion rail: that is worth remembering.

So you feel returning youth! I wonder why it is that there is no real relief for a parson, vacations or not, when he has a parish? The "weight of souls," even if one is not sentimental about it, is a drag about the ankle. I have felt ten or twenty years younger myself.

The winter drew on, and he was ordered South. He was in Jamaica with his family. On January 20, 1916, he wrote:

I am glad that you sent me Dr. Nash's *Prayers*. I wanted them, and having them from you brings him nearer. How beautiful is the prayer for courage! I wonder if, after all, the prayers we say are not the gauge of our worth. It seems to me that Nash didn't let the best of himself get into his books.

It is a comfort to my way of thinking that you consider the Pentecost question worthy of such thoughtful consideration. I don't refer to the miraculous setting merely—but the thing it did in the deep places of the heart. Don't you think that such passages as Acts II, 44, 46, 47; and III, 32, are among the most wonderful in the whole New Testament? For a few minutes, as it were, the Kingdom came on a little spot of earth. Some day men will again eat their bread in simple happiness and be of one mind.

It is a minor matter, but I shall not concede that War has ever produced a poem or inspired a poet. It has always choked the imagination. I am glad to have the reference at the bottom of Page 309. When the news of the destruction of Rheims Cathedral reached me, it came to me that Rheims was too beautiful for our dull age. Europe had already desecrated its beauty. We must earn the right to it again.

It is perpetual June here and I am really very well. I wonder if a Winter hotel is anything worth being well for. Some day I shall write an essay on the degeneracy of folks who dwell in hotels.

The Spring found him again on his farm at Peabody. He loved every inch of it; and, at night, he liked to look down the valley to the lights of the neighboring town. But, as Lent wore on, he was haunted with memories of the quiet services he had led in his parishes. He wrote to Alexander:

I love your *Spoon River* poet. My wife calls it depressing. Being a parson, I like depressing things. We are having our Holy Week services, Mrs. Smith and the children and I. Austin pronounced my Palm Sunday sermon "rather good." This silent Lent has been endurable.

As Summer came and plans must be made for the children's schools, he decided to take an

apartment at 1000 Park Ave., in New York. So in the Fall of 1916 the New York life began. To a Springfield parishioner he wrote:

We have a charming little nest up in the sky where our family swings to and fro in the wind. The worm's-eye view of New York is more charming than the bird's, but we need not look out of our windows.

Think of us on Christmas day in Christ Church, especially at the nice Carol Service and, if you have time, go up and say a Merry Christmas to Mr. Moxon for me after the service and tell him how I miss his lovely carols.

And to you we all send lots of love and a happy Christmas-time.

VI

THE EDITOR IN NEW YORK

IN 1916 the directors of *The Churchman* were seeking an editor. The Rev. Charles K. Gilbert was resigning the work, generously awaiting a successor. When Smith was urged to allow his name to be used, he wrote:

Please do not push me for the editorship of *The Churchman*. I prefer a subordinate position. I know nothing about newspaper work and I had better learn the ropes, as a subordinate. I am not ambitious to lead.

Smith did, however, accept the editorship when it was offered him. His friends felt that here was a task exactly fitted to the limitations of his physical endurance. He could, more or less, command his time; though, with the pressure of the War, his staff was often hopelessly small, and he was forced to do too much work. Saved the nervous strain of preaching, his message yet went forth week by week to thousands

who came to look upon him as their prophet. Younger clergy in small, remote places were encouraged by his stimulating Christian courage in facing present-day problems. When they came to New York, they sought out his office for counsel and cheer, and, side by side with the pleasant jest, was the sympathy of an understanding heart. He would often say to me of this or that forlorn parson: "He is discouraged; he is a good sort—won't you speak a word for him if you know of a vacant parish?" He became a friend, and men knew that he cared.

The Churchman began to be a force to be reckoned with. It began to have enemies as well as enthusiastic friends. Smith sent out his philippics against war and narrow nationalism, when war was being preached as a gate to Heaven, and nationalism, Heaven itself. He was sensitive to both condemnation and praise.

I am tremendously enthusiastic about the job [he wrote]. I know that I am going to love the work and my head is buzzing with plans. I shall make mistakes, of course, but I shall try not to be too dull. You must be generous with your help and advice.

Please don't be afraid of wounding my feelings.

I want you to tell me just what your impressions are so that I can become accustomed to reading my articles with other people's eyes. Let me know if you detect any trace of flippancy. Everybody wants "pep" put into *The Churchman*. I shall try to put the journalistic note into my writing, but flippancy is my danger.

You have been most kind in finding me a vocation in my interrupted ministry. Now you must keep me up to my best.

I wrote the Wilson and Eliot editorial. I hope that this sort of thing is not too political. But people are talking about these things, and a Church paper can't ignore the subject.

Later he wrote:

No Church paper has ever yet really tried to do the thing as it might be done, and I believe we are in the way of making a beginning. A clergyman in England the other day, congratulating us on our handling of the Archbishop's visit, said that there is no paper in England that is filling the place *The Churchman* occupies. He is close to the Archbishop and was lamenting the lack of publicity his Grace got on his return from America.

What I want to avoid is simply pegging along, publishing a paper for old ladies and decrepit parsons. I feel that there is a big field for religious journalism now and want to get into the field. It is on my mind every hour.

As the War went on he felt the call to do more to help the men at the front and their parents at home.

We are getting letters [he wrote] from chaplains saying how much they value *The Churchman*. Dewart, who is not ecclesiastical or a gusher, says it is the best reading he gets. He values it tremendously. Only the other day a chaplain wrote asking whether there is any way *The Churchman* can be sent to camps and all chaplains free.

Again; only a wild suggestion, but what should you think of sending Shipler to France as our correspondent for a month? The story is not being written as it should be. He is wonderfully graphic and could report the whole situation from the standpoint of the Churches. Why not? It would be a comfort to parents and friends to read stuff in *The Churchman* every week direct from the front.

This may be all moonshine, but I shall never rest in my grave till *The Churchman* is the best and most alert Church paper ever published.

Unexpectedly the opportunity came to send Mr. Shipler abroad.

I got richly rewarded [he wrote] for telegraphing Shipler to interview Holden. *The Churchman* has been invited by the British Empire to send a representative to England to visit the war activities, the North Sea Fleet, and the Western Front. The Em-

pire pays all expenses. *The Outlook* goes and some other "high class" papers. Isn't that fine! So my prayer is answered. I should love to go, but Shipler would do it better, and I must stay and do the drudgery.

Later still he wrote:

You will be glad to know that I have had a flood of the nicest letters about my editorial on the House of Bishops, Hodges' and the Editor of *The Southern Churchman* being the nicest. It all helps poor modest me.

Smith's relations with his staff were intimate.¹ The staff became like a family and he praised each for his or her peculiar excellence. He was early in the office. He read five or six papers every morning and evening; and as soon as he reached the office he drew from his green bag the sheaf of clippings which he had torn from these papers: clippings touching the Church, Industry, International Affairs. He read two English weeklies and many Church papers of this country for the same purpose. Instantly he began to discuss possible items or editorials, commenting on this

¹ For the details of this paragraph I am indebted to an article by Miss McCracken, in *The Churchman* for October 12, 1922.

news. His correspondence was huge, and he applied himself next to dictating his answers. Then he would take out an editorial (which he had allowed to grow cold) and read it to Mr. Shipler and Miss McCracken to get their reaction. He was further always seeking articles from the people too busy to do anything more, whose contribution, if they would write, he knew would be great. When a fine article came in, the whole staff was called in to hear choice sentences from it.

One of his staff said that he treated the staff as a good Rector treats his parish. He sought unity among all the workers. And their troubles were his. He sought to save them from worry, and he cheerfully doubled his work when one fell ill. Once he wrote: "Miss Hobart is ill. So I, I only, am left."

Large places were offered him, others were suggested if he would consider them. He was grateful for recognition; but always announced that his health would not bear the strain; and then he would add to some intimate friend: "After all, I already have the most influential post in the Church. Why should I leave it for anything else, even if I could?" The Theological School in Cambridge gave to

him the degree of Doctor of Divinity, with praise of his unique work for the Church.

After writing a caustic, biting editorial, the editor wished that he had been gentler. But from his own hard experience, with his sympathy for human suffering, he had been seeing the dead coal-miner and his bereaved family, he had been seeing the bewildered foreigners innocently trapped in some nest of traitors, he had heard unreal words pompously blown into ears ready to hear what is true, he had seen trimmers, the utterly selfish, the blasphemers; and his cry arose against the priests and the levites, who could see and who could hear, but who passed by on the other side.

One who wrote continuously, year in and year out, on all great religious and moral issues, could not always have been right. That he ran the risk of making mistakes when the woes of God's people smote his heart, is evidence of his own willingness to be lost if, through his preaching, some might be saved. He always wrote what he believed true, and he wrote it whatever the consequences to him or his paper. He believed that he had a commission from God, and tried with all his inner strength to speak the truth.

He had found the supreme work of his life. He was in touch with men who were leading in many departments. They grew to admire him and trust him. He was often the author of important documents which brave men were glad to sign and thus make their own.

He grew to love New York. "I am hermit enough," he said, "to like the crowded streets, where no one knows you, and you can be so beautifully alone." With a friend he often walked these streets, and spoke caressingly of the life which they bounded. He was thrilled by it.

He was again my parishioner, as well as my dear friend.

I shall miss sadly [he wrote] not being with you on Easter. The services have brought me and mine great comfort and help this year. One of the nicest things about being in New York is that it has restored the good old times when we walked the hills of Faribault together and dreamed dreams. We are together again and for always. You were really my first rector; I shall not relinquish the status of parishioner.

In making friends for *The Churchman*, he made warm personal friends. Mrs. Willard

Straight, who is one of the best friends *The Churchman* ever had, wrote, in 1922:

The first impact of his personality remains as fresh and clear to me as the note of a new bird in my Long Island home in Spring. He came to see me one morning, three years ago, to tell me about the affairs of *The Churchman*. All through the Winter people had been coming to me with projects of one sort or another, and it had been my joy to help here and there whenever the object commended itself. But after talking five minutes with Dr. Smith I realized that he was offering me something unique and beautiful. He made me aware of the forces alive within the Church which promised some day to teach us something about the responsibilities involved in the effort of the Christians. And *The Churchman*, in attempting fearlessly and honestly to find the way for those who were seeking enlightenment, seemed, indeed, at that moment the organ of the Church Militant—as one dreamed of it. That short hour with Dr. Smith initiated for me a new and vital interest in the life of the Church, and to that first meeting with him I owe much of the joy that has accrued through later years from the new allegiance.

My subsequent impressions of Dr. Smith only tended to verify and intensify the first. As time went on, our common interests brought us much together, primarily in committee work. I shall always think of him as the gayest member of any group, so full of vitality that his spirit never flagged.

His humour lightened even the hardest labour and his quick-flashing responses cut always to the heart of things. He never refused his help to an unpopular cause, provided it seemed to him right, and he rallied gallantly to the support of all those who either on the frontiers or back in the council rooms were fighting for greater freedom and truth. He was afraid of nothing and of nobody, and where for others it might have been easy to concede and to compromise he always chose the harder part of ruthless honesty.

With friends, he let himself go in all sorts of violent flings against his favourite horrors. He abominated the Pharisaism which relentlessly pursued the penitent sinner and barred all the gates of righteousness for the exclusive use of those whose sin had not been revealed. He became an advocate of free pews in church.

I have been getting a taste of church-going from the pew-standpoint [he wrote]. I am converted to the free-pew system. I am willing to be a guest of the Lord when I go to church, but it hurts my pride to be a guest of "the really rich" also. I am always sitting on people's hats, and they seem annoyed.

He laughed immoderately at the contrast between some gentle, low-voiced suffragists and some aggressive, strong-minded anti-suffragists. "They get up on the housetops," he said,

and proclaim, 'Behold me, a clinging vine!' " He spoke indignantly of all the people with privilege. They ought, he said, to disgorge, and find out what life really is; so that they could have pity and sympathy. I reminded him that he might be classed as a privileged person himself: why did he not give up his two pleasant houses? Whereat he looked over his shoulder and left me with the parting shot, "Isn't it hard enough to preach, without being obliged to practice, too!"

His family were, as always, his solace. At one time Mrs. Smith was ill and forced to be away for complete quiet. In his loneliness, his children were great companions. One rainy Sunday, when children's colds were prevalent, he went off to church alone, leaving the children to have service by themselves. He opened the door to see that all was well. The boy, the eldest (being ten), was the minister, and the two little girls were the congregation. They had just said together the General Confession, and the boy was rising to pronounce the Absolution; whereupon the youngest child rose too. "Kneel down," said the boy, interrupting himself: "You must stay down for this." "Well," protested the remaining mem-

ber of the flock, "Father says you have no right to say that part anyway." But the service went on with real reverence, in spite of the audible rubrics and unusual responses. In telling me of the incident afterwards, Smith said: "I shut the door so quietly that they didn't know I had overheard. It is really very hard for the ladies; since the parson insists that they remain on their knees through his sermon—which is apt to be quite personal. It has such words as, '*I know a little girl who, etc.*' The sinners always know which one is meant!"

Later the boy was at St. Mark's while the little girls remained in New York schools. He quoted them all proudly. They too helped to make *The Churchman*. While his elder daughter was visiting friends in Springfield; Mr. Alexander chanced to come back to preach. Smith reported her comments to the preacher:

Josephine says that you preached a great sermon in Christ Church. This is what she said: "It really was so strong that I slept very little. After it was over its points and clauses were ringing in my ears as chords of music often do after a great concert." If she meant that she slept very little during the sermon, it must have been pretty fine. Perhaps some-



THE CHILDREN ON THE FARM AT PEABODY

From a portrait by F. W. Benson

time when you have time on your hands you will send me a copy of it, and an extract may occur in *The Churchman* in about two years, for we are about that far behind with our manuscripts. Anyhow, I am awfully glad you are such a good preacher.

Alexander gratefully recalls that when in the bleak January of 1917 he had a severe attack of iritis, and was obliged temporarily to give up his work, Smith came to Leominster, Massachusetts (where Alexander's parish was), to take his services. Leaving New York on Saturday night and returning on Monday morning, he had not only the journey to Worcester, but also a particularly long and dismal trolley ride to Leominster. The average congregation on Sunday morning was perhaps fifty, and to these few mill operatives he preached the best sermons in his store. This is the way he had offered himself to Alexander:

I don't like to urge too strenuously my services, but I wish you would feel that it wouldn't really involve any sacrifice on my part and would do me a great deal of good. I am not naturally disposed to put myself out much, and it gave me a good deal of pleasure to think that I could be of use to somebody. You know I am frightfully useless these days. I should like to fall upon somebody's shoulders and pour out my wretched tale.

At any rate I want you to know that you can call on me, and please get out of your mind that it will involve lots of discomfort on my part. If I had thought it would, I doubt if I should have been good enough to propose coming. So if the old fellow who is supplying gives out, just send for me.

I do hope your eyes are improving. I thought of you sympathetically the other night as I sat up, enduring one of my "acute inflammation" attacks.

So he did "practice" after all. He knew all too well what such efforts were likely to cost him. It was the inevitable longing to be a pastor and a preacher. "Editing," he said, "is fun: but I do like people better." He was as a pastor to his old friends. He did not forsake a friend when disgrace fell upon him. He pleaded; he rebuked; but the love did not die. And when one returned from a sorrowful journey to an empty house, it was Smith whom one summoned to spend the first evening there, that the silence might be full with his understanding.

As he passed his fiftieth birthday, he wrote to a Springfield parishioner:

How good to be remembered when one gets to be fifty; I am it, even if I look only 49½. My blond wig is showing grey around the edges, and my wife won't dye it.

The Spring of 1922 was more and more interrupted with days of weariness and illness. But he kept on. Even as late as July 15, he wrote from Peabody:

I spent a few days in New York last week and picked up odds and ends of my job. I am continuing to write editorials this summer without a break. It adds spice to a monotonous farm life.

Do you think that I ought to go to General Convention? I hate it; I loathe it; but somehow I think that I ought to go and write letters for *The Churchman* from Portland. Tell me what you think concerning my duty. In some ways it would be jolly seeing so much of my friends, and it might chance that I should have a seat in the same coach with you. These are assets.

Bishop Paddock is coming to visit me and tell me his story. He is going to resign. That is a dead secret. When one gets a Christian Bishop, one doesn't know what to do with him.

Lord Grey of the Reform Bill is stunning. So also is Salisbury's *Life*.

I shall be going down to New York again week after next. So let me hear from you before I go.

His discomfiture of the Spring grew into such distress that he was sent to a hospital "to be observed." Early in August the doctors de-

cided that he must have an operation. He wrote to Mr. Shipler:

I am pretty well shot to pieces and I am pretty tired of it all. You see, for twenty-five years I have carried this kidney trouble. Probably my bad breathing is due to that, but my nights are not happy affairs. . . . I am a kind of damaged goods, anyway, so they can't spoil me much. They may help me and they may kill me. Anyway it is all right, for I sometimes think that I have done my last work. Don't think that I am blue. I am not. I am as peaceful as can be, except when I can't breathe and my stomach refuses to stay put. It has been a great game, life has, but I don't feel awfully anxious to fight much more.

On August 9, he wrote me a letter, which was evidently the fragments of a longer letter.

Your invitation to assist at the Consecration makes me very happy. I'll do anything you wish from carrying your jewels or train to laying my hands on your head to make your bishoping valid. If it will help your work to give recognition to newer friends in Boston, leave me out and use others. I am a friend anyway.

Just as soon as a room is available at the hospital in Boston I am to have an operation for thyroid gland. It seems that I have been carrying the thing without the doctors' knowing it for many years. It

has helped to aggravate my other troubles. The specialist tells me that I can't go on as I am going at present for more than a short time. I myself know that, for life the last six months has been a great weariness of the flesh. But it is good to know that something can be cut out. There is some risk, but not a great deal.

In case the thing goes badly, I wish you would open the enclosed letter and tell my wife the things which I think will comfort her. If I get through it successfully which I am confident I shall, just return the letter to me.

The operation is a relief, however it goes, for I have been sitting up nights now for many weeks trying to get my breath.

My love to you, dear friend.

Pardon these scraps. I have destroyed some things which I wrote, but I didn't have the energy to write the letter over.

I went off to the General Convention very deeply worried, but hoping that the strength which had sustained him in former crises would be his for this new battle. He was moved to a hospital in New York, where a specialist promised greater hope. But the end came on September 27. I then opened the letter which he had given me in August.

BROOKSBY FARM

PEABODY, MASS.

August 9, 1922

DEAR CHARLES,

I want you to tell my wife how altogether happy I am to have the end come as it has. I have dreaded the kind of invalidism which usually comes with chronic nephritis. But I have been so lucky in having been able to do the work I love up to the end. Tell her that I have had my choice and that God has been very, very good to me.

I have left word to have some of my *Atlantic* articles and a few things I have written for *The Churchman* put into a little booklet. My children some day might value it. Will you write a little foreword for it? You know the controversial spirit that has come out in my *Churchman* work is not really me. I have never preached that way. I really am a pastor.

I think it might help some young fellows who break down early in their ministry to know that twenty-four years ago a London specialist advised me to give up the active ministry. I took St. Paul's, Milwaukee, instead. My ministry has probably been just as useful as it would have been, had I had strong health. It has been a disappointment to refuse some of the places that have been offered to me, but I think it has been for the best.

Look after my boy. Good, good luck to you, my friend.

Affectionately,

WM. AUSTIN SMITH.

And so he passed. He had inherited the promise: *To him that overcometh will I give a white stone, and in the stone a new name written which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.* He faced well-nigh insuperable obstacles; he fought hard; and he won a glorious victory.

WILLIAM AUSTIN SMITH
SPECIMENS OF HIS WORK

I

THE HETERODOXY OF GENIUS

WHEN Burne-Jones was asked to undertake the work of filling the four semi-domes below the great centre dome of St. Paul's, London, with mosaic, he, after careful deliberation, declined the commission. "It's nonsense," he writes, "to put mosaic there—nonsense to try to do anything with it but let it chill the soul of man and gently prepare him for the next glacial cataclysm. It wants carpets hung about, and big, huge, dark oil pictures, and hangings of rich stuffs, and the windows let alone, no stained glass anywhere, no colour except black and silver, no chilling surplices, Bach always being played, and me miles away—me miles away, if possible, and I'll be content with it." And writing to a friend at this time regarding his impression of the great church, he continues, "I wonder if it crushed and depressed you as it does me; and if you

could pray in it, and to whom; and if you had any hope that a prayer could get beyond the cornices."

In this æsthetic sensitiveness of the artist, we have a genuine piece of protestantism illustrating the mood of genius towards organized religion. When he has frankly exposed its limitations and has mourned its faults, one suspects that, were improvements ordered to suit his taste, his aggressive preference would remain as in the case of Burne-Jones, to say his prayers miles away from the renovated temple.

Such are the musings of one who, without presuming to speak intimately of dignitaries, has from time to time, in his experience as an Episcopal parson, cast covetous glances at genius seemingly going to waste outside parochial bounds.

Genius standing aloof—sometimes aggressively so—from confirmation classes and the counsels of the Church, is the tempting morsel which generations of churchmen have coveted for the faith. Our inability to lure genius in appreciable numbers into the fold has caused grave searchings of heart and volumes of apologetics. We have felt it to be a silent reproach upon our faith that spiritual good,

nourishing to us, the rank and file, should not be good enough for them. This solicitude is altogether commendable, for what loyal churchman can forbear reckoning the prestige which the allegiance of the ablest men of the community might lend to our creeds and churches. It suggests the fascinating picture of George Eliot early making her way to service and demurely finding the places for the clergy, instead of exposing our frailties in those charming causeries at the Priory with Spencer, Rossetti, and the intimates of her *salon*.

When we contrive to attract genius that tolerates us, we are likely to be unrestrained in our appreciation, so that the gentle conformity of a Pasteur and the militant loyalty of a Gladstone are over-capitalized for homiletic purposes. We treat their good-will and endorsement much like the haberdashers and victualers in England, exhibiting over their shops the gilded approval of some royal customer.

There is an abundance of clinical material in literature for studying the man of genius when in action against organized religion.

Edward FitzGerald is a typical case. The

curate at Woodbridge called one day to expostulate with his distinguished parishioner for not appearing at church. The man, doubtless irritating in his assumption of authority, nettled the poet into unvarnished frankness. "Sir, you might have conceived that a man has not come to my years without thinking much of these things. I believe, I may say, I have reflected upon them fully as much as yourself. You need not repeat this visit."

One recalls the incident which Henry James relates of the newly settled rector in the parish where Carlyle was living, calling one day upon his "doughty parishioner." To avert the calamity, which from an open window he saw descending upon him, Carlyle seizes his stick, dons his coat, and meets the rector on the doorstep. Not to be outdone, this representative of organized religion accepts the neighbourly invitation to walk a piece. Part of the conversation along the road is to our purpose. "It is much, no doubt," said Carlyle, when the eager parson had ventured on volcanic ground, "to have a decent ceremonial of worship and an educated, polite sort of person to administer it, but the main want of the world, as I gather just now, and of this parish especially . . . is

to discover someone who really knows God otherwise than by hearsay, and can tell us what divine work is actually to be done here and now in London streets, and not of a totally different work which behooved to be done two thousand years ago in old Judæa. I much hope that you are just the man we look for, and I give you my word you will strike dissent dumb if such really be the case."

Something of the same thought must have been in the mind of Emerson when, in the famous Divinity College address, made nearly a century ago in little Holden Chapel, he recalls a preacher who sorely tempted him to go to church no more. "A snowstorm was falling around us, the snowstorm was real, the preacher merely spectral. The eye felt the sad contrast in looking at him and then out of the window behind him, into the beautiful meteor of the snow. He had lived in vain, he had not one word intimating that he had laughed or wept, was married or in love, had been commended or cheated or chagrined. The capital secret of his profession, namely, to convert life into truth, he had not learned. Not one fact in all his experience had he yet imported into his doctrine. This man had ploughed and

planted and taught and bought and sold; he had read books; he had eaten and drunken; his head aches, his heart throbs, he smiles and suffers, yet was there not a surmise, a hint in all the discourse, that he had ever lived at all."

But the restlessness of genius in the pew is not of modern origin. In the books of the Prophets may be found quite as biting denunciation of the whole solemn proceedings of the churches as has ever come from the heated pen of genius. The anarchic spirit surely is rife in the Prophets of Israel. Bernard Shaw never wrote anything more caustic about solemn evensong than he who said: "The new moons and sabbaths, the calling of the assemblies, I cannot away with. It is iniquity, even the solemn meeting." It was sheer restlessness of genius in a constricting environment which made Savonarola start bonfires in Florence. The thing must be vitalized by some daring act of nonconformity. St. Francis's queerness, much of it,—his sermons to the birds, his settlement work among the lepers, his unconventional asperities,—was a safety-valve for the fidgety spirit of genius under the restrictions of conventional religion. Had he lived in other times, and had he not, besides being a genius,

been a saint, he might not have gone to church at all.

But the clergy have a more personal grudge against genius than mere neglect. From Laertes berating the poor priest for doing his official duty by the body of Ophelia, to Ibsen's "Ghosts," the parson has usually been made to act and speak like a fool when presented on the stage. One has the creeping suspicion that that is about the way he really appears to the man of genius and to a considerable minority who suffer us gladly. The smug Anglican type in clerical garb before the footlights, in his guilelessness and bigotry, is the chastisement we are likely to receive at the hands of the playwright unless we choose our theatre-going with discretion. Now, the clergy might bear the rebuke with humility, did they not suspect that Pastor Manders and the Bishop of Lancashire are symbols of the Church's interpretation of religion, in the mind not only of Ibsen and Charles Rann Kennedy, but of a very considerable company of gifted folk. We may as well face the nauseous fact that we bore the genius, and while, perhaps, he shows a lively sensibility to all sorts of bores among his fellow men, yet he suffers us with a difference.

He resents what seems to him our impudence in daring to analyze and define these expansive mysteries with which we deal. The light of the Temple is garish to these highly organized individuals, who imagine they feel more reverently the truths we handle with rough hands. Our blunt appreciation, our jaunty handling of crushing mysteries, our neat tabulating of certainties, all this irritates and shocks their squeamish reverence. They miss in us, too often, that nice restraint which one has a right to expect from those who enjoy an intimate survey of truth. They do not absent themselves from church and appear heterodox because they wish to dispense with religion, but, as Emerson hints, because our religion frequently seems profane to their delicate sensibilities. They seem to catch a false note in some of our garrulous devotion to truth.

Now, the difficulty of studying the attitude of genius toward organized religion is aggravated by the fact that the protests which come from men of exceptional ability, statesmen, artists, scientists, and men of large administrative talent, are as varied as their several temperaments. Sir Oliver Lodge, for example, in writing upon the alleged indifference of lay-

men to religion, bids the clergy study reality and sincerity; strive to say what they really mean, and to say it in such a way that others may know what they mean. He frankly confesses that he is bored by the length of the *Te Deum*, the repetitions of the *Kyrie*; he tolerates the creeds because he finds no reality about the procedure of saying them. Lodge here expresses the mind of a considerable company of men of ability who lack the taste and capacity for corporate worship of any sort. I suspect that no tinkering with the liturgy could conciliate this extreme type of nonconformity.

But running through the testimony of the men who will have none of us, is a single strand of protest which indicates the temperament. It is essentially nonconformist, genuinely protestant and intolerant. A genius can rarely be held in social groups in such first-hand matters as faith and worship. His directness and intensity of vision are themselves limitations which narrow the field of comradeship. He sees further, but sometimes not so much as common folk. His short cuts to reality make him impatient with the more orderly conventional routes. With less pretense to frequent converse with God, he approaches Him, never-

theless, with a certain ceremony of the spirit after a liturgy of his own. The clear sweep he gets on the outside, unobstructed by the details which belong to the officework of religion, appeals to his romantic temperament. Offensive particulars like heresy trials, the fussiness of dignitaries, and church controversies, fret his spirit. Out he goes to gather his most excellent beauty by the way.

If the Church, by virtue of being a social organism, is inherently conservative, it must take the snail's pace in adjusting itself to new conditions; but genius, on the other hand, is irritable and impatient with dilatory, palliative methods. Imagine Darwin compelled to sit in a pew and listen to a generation of the harmonizing of science and revelation, or Wendell Phillips to bide his time while the clergy are mired in Biblical exegesis in getting at the mind of God on the slave question. But what a horrid protestant over-emphasis! There are the sacraments! Yes, but here again is the temperament of genius with its own sacramental relationship to God! One recognizes that happy distinction between the prophetic and priestly function of the ministry, and in seeming to give undue prominence to the irri-

tation of genius over our leanness of prophetic gifts, we would not excuse him for neglecting our priestly ministrations. But the romantic element in genius has rendered him no more plastic in the hands of the priest than of the prophet.

Is there a catholicity obtainable which can keep this energy of spirit from kicking over the traces? I do not believe it. The eternal "antithesis of the conventional and romantic" types, neither fully comprehending the other, prevents the two temperaments from keeping house comfortably together. We are a bit too aggressive, I believe, in our ideal of catholicity, and we worry ourselves needlessly over the clever folk who will have none of our ministrations. Why not leave these exceptional persons to get to heaven in their own way, accepting in good faith their service to the Kingdom of God? If there is a goodly company of virtuous and able folk who do not want to say our creeds, why worry about it? Why not leave them in peace as members of the great Invisible Church, where no one is asked to define his beliefs or talk about them to his neighbor, or say them over and spell them out on Sunday mornings, or sing them if he does not

like to sing them, or pray them out in words if he does not choose to pray them in words? We might leave these men and women to their broad pastures, and, without malice, bury them if they ask it, or burn them if the public good demands it; but let us not harass our nerves, forever angling after the men who seem able to get to heaven without our help, and are annoyed by our importunity.

I am certain that any setting of things to rights will not win over the class to which Sir Oliver Lodge belongs. To them, organized religion will always remain stupid and uninspiring. The minority who are grieved at this or that in the churches, and contend that if things were different they would find themselves in hearty accord, are frequently self-deceived. Their explanation seldom reveals the real cause of their impatience. Bernard Shaw would like to go to church if the services would stop and give him an opportunity to worship. George Eliot can retain her spiritual integrity only by staying away. Carlyle wants a church that assails contemporary devils. Lincoln once wrote, "Whenever any church will inscribe over its altar, as its sole qualification for membership the Saviour's condensed

statement of the substance of both law and gospel, that church I will join with all my heart and all my soul."

It was doubtless measurably harder in Lincoln's day to find a relaxed theology than it is to-day, when one may select from the menu of the various churches a sufficiently genial diet; but I do not believe Lincoln, were he living, would be found heart and soul in accord with any of the easy-going creedless churches. Not every genius is so frank as Burne-Jones to admit that, while he likes to tinker with ecclesiastical decorations, even the carrying out of his scheme of colour would not induce him to go to church. Genius has not fled in numbers to churches with an unoffending theology. It is not primarily a question of creed or liturgy, but incompatibility of temperament, which divorces a goodly number of persons from organized religion.

But the romantic temperament, insisting upon the free air of the Invisible Church, is frequently unjust to other spiritual climates, in which his brothers thrive. He forgets that conventional religion interprets the vision to the rank and file. When we are told with fervour that religion is not a creed or church

attendance, but an expansive something else, we, who belong to the great middle class of the spirit, and go to church and say our prayers in uninspired fashion, may say that we have long known that; but why overlook the psychology of the ordinary man, who, without a creed and a prayerbook, would perhaps have no religion at all.

It is, after all, not the business of the Church to adjust itself to these unusual types. There is a certain carnal satisfaction to smaller minds in seeing a genius like Tolstoi, when he attempts, in *My Religion*, to organize his religious experience into a creed, nodding at times like ordinary laymen. The common man, when decently mellowed with humility, and willing to be conventional in his faith, is quite as likely to avoid saying foolish things about the mysteries of religion as these exceptional persons.

The average man has no wish to be niggardly with his creed. To believe more than is barely necessary to salvation, and to spread before the Lord a bountiful profession of faith, is his harmless indulgence in works of supererogation. Were we to cut him down to the meagre necessities of faith, we should cramp

his willing spirit and rob him of the innocent pleasure of a generous gift of orthodoxy on Sunday mornings.

Organized religion, like organized education, must be democratic in its adjustment to the requirements of the majority. It prays as the average man would pray, worships as he would worship, and formulates its creed for his instruction,—else how should we explain the evolution of liturgies? Should we reorganize religion to key it up to the pitch of the rare spirits, we might divorce the rank and file, whose sorrows, burdens, and moral perplexities are reached by the evenly sustained tone of conventional worship. If the great majority find a congenial home in the churches, we may safely disregard the welfare of this distinguished remnant, who can be trusted to find God in their own unconventional way. The dream of including all humanity in one fold of orthodoxy is a high catholic ideal; but perhaps in the interim before the coming of the millennium we ought not to irritate our nerves because certain gifted persons do not require our ministrations.

Nevertheless, the genius has a place in the economy of organized religion. We owe to his

spiritual irritability and sturdy protestant temper that "variety" which, evolutionists tell us "is the indispensable element in progress." His insistent demand for freedom has developed, as it did with Isaiah, St. Paul, and Luther, new types of religion. Shall we complain that we cannot put the ecclesiastical bit into his mouth and harness his solid talents to drag our guilds, vestries, and diocesan conventions? The millennium would probably be no nearer were all nonconformists suddenly to become docile pew-holders, accepting the doctrine as the Church hath received it. The genius, from the militant type of the reformers down to their kinsmen who administer the large affairs of the world, will ever remain the bulwark of protestantism to save us from sterile orthodoxy.

While we are solemnly debating Canon 19, the rubric and validity of orders—all vital, no doubt, to social religion—it is not for naught that this gifted company stand without, rebuking us by silence or disdain, and refusing to glorify our folly by sharing the debate. There is a tonic in the sight of able men holding critically aloof, abstaining from mental reservations, and telling us how it all looks to them.

Were it not for them, religion again and again would have been sapped of its native vigour, and the reformation halted. Their protests in time become articulate in new creeds. Voltaire served us better laughing at us than paying dues to Peter's pence. No sham is secure while he is in Europe. The eviction of organized religion, in the person of the curate of Woodbridge, from FitzGerald's doorstep that day, though ungenerous and uncatholic in the seer and damaging to the pride of the man who believed he was speaking the whole mind of God, may have borne good fruit in after years in that Suffolk parish. For the rest of his ministry, perhaps, the curate struggled to fit the poet's view into his scheme of salvation, an exercise by no means profitless to the clerical mind.

While we are affirming how "this church hath received the same," the genius dares to ask: "What of it? I happen to be interested, just now, in how my church hath received the same." Correlating the two revelations brings us a sane working basis for the average man.

This querulous foisting of a big ideal upon the priest's and prophet's vocation is not lost upon the cause. It curbs the arrogance of the priest, and stimulates the prophet. Perhaps

the weekly sermon finds its highest incentive to excellence and reality in the protest of the man outside who refuses to hear it. He is the audience sometimes we try hardest to reach. I dare say we find that those five or six hyper-critical beings who are doing some of the world's best work, loyal men of the community, but who will have none of our sermons, have quite as much influence in keeping us to the right pitch as the receptive saint in the front pew who cherishes our very helpful discourses. This spiritual irritability, and this withal honest yearning for reality, are the solvent of much folly and uncritical certainty.

While we are militantly guarding our precious deposits of truth, it is good to think of the man who sits outside our doors, holding converse with the Father and from time to time reporting rapturous interviews with the God of things as they are. It is wholesome to be told that, for some wise and good men, our liturgies are not the final idiom of worship; that the creeds and prayer-books are only imperfect phrasings of faith; and that the Church of today is not the sole agent of Christ in bringing in the Kingdom of God.

There is a place in the economy of the

Church for the man outside, with his insistent cry for reality, yet reverently conscious of human inability to attain it. Standing aloof, he goads us on till the thing we say is constant to the thing we mean; the symbol adequate to the fact; and the faith within us becomes articulate in creed, liturgy, canons, and organization, commensurate to the mystery and dignity of religious truth. Perhaps, as the Church tries to satisfy this demand for reality, even though it fail to attain a catholicity which will include every temperament, it may divorce from its ranks only a minimum of gifted minds, while burnishing the faith for the rank and file.

II

BROWNING AND THE SPECIAL INTERESTS

Come now, let each of us awhile cry truce to special interests.—PRINCE HOHENSTIEL-SCHWANGAU.

I

TO the poet, not to Mr. La Follette, belongs the distinction of sending the phrase "special interests" to the mint. When it rolled from the poet's pen, however, it was less bulky with connotation than now. To envisage the "interests" of Browning's Prince Hohenstiel-Schwangau one must begin by stripping the phrase of some of its more recent honours. "The Saviour of Society" was written in 1871. Mr. Roosevelt had not yet entered upon his career, and we in America had not been taught to think of oil and tobacco, sugar and copper, as predatory interests. Watts, in the brutal splendour of his Mammon, has helped us to clothe the idea in colour.

Browning, we recall, would have us see the

thing at a different angle. One of the political enigmas of the last generation was Napoleon III, the target at once of furious scorn and adulation. In a poem of some two thousand lines, Browning gives this client, under the title of Prince Hohenstiel-Schwangau, opportunity to defend himself and his theory of civilization.

In that leisurely apology the quartette of glowing causes—"Liberty, Philanthropy, Enlightenment, and Patriotism," which since Rousseau have been declaimed uninterruptedly—are styled "the special interests." As the Prince saw it, the most insidious lobby against which civilization must brace itself is the activity of gracious sentiments. He believed that only by holding these interests in the leash of common sense can society be maintained on a decent footing. The Prince had reason for the faith that was in him, and Browning with the urbanity of a good listener lets him tell his unromantic story.

The audacity of the Prince lies in his irreverent imputation. To place Liberty, Philanthropy, Enlightenment, and Patriotism in the same fetid lobby with sugar, oil, and tobacco is to toy perilously with romanticism. We have

been taught to think of these dignitaries with respect. To call Philanthropy a special interest, along with soap and copper, is an insult to the spacious sentiments of our time.

But the poet lays down his hand before the whole goodly company of us—agitators, reformers, philanthropists, clergymen, and all the restless adventurers of light. “I call you special interests,” he seems to say. “You declaim about Enlightenment, Progress, and Philanthropy. These are interests I grant you, but they are special. Civilization has its other concerns as well—‘workshop, manufactory, exchange and market-place, seaport and customhouse o’ the frontier, mouths that wanted bread, hands that supplicated handiwork, men with wives and women with the babes—all these pleadings just to live, not die.’ ”

Now, once grant that any interest is “special,” with all the potential alarm of that phrase, and you have disarmed it. There is no real danger to democracy from any special interest branded as such. By classifying it, we have plucked the sting of its eloquence and compelled it to defend its innocence of intention before the bar of public opinion.

But the heady atmosphere of reform has been too tonic for the growth of humility on the part of Liberty, Philanthropy, Enlightenment, and Patriotism. We may expose the so-called "special interests" and hale them into court, but who in this enlightened century dares summon Philanthropy into court and say, "You must have supervision and control?"

It requires courage to urge indictment against these "interests." There is an appealing chivalry about their calling, and they know it. Their benevolent intention shelters a goodly brood of noble causes—shorter hours for labour, child-labour laws, mothers', widows', and orphans' pensions, child culture, eugenics, and all the insurgent forces of modernity. Benign enough these interests look as we name them in glowing capitals, "Liberty, Philanthropy, Enlightenment, and Patriotism"; but oppose their lobby and we shall discover their power. A legion of forces have they at command—power to petition and to plead, to pamphleteer and denounce, to organize leagues, to storm the halls of legislation and compel us into joining or losing our sociological position in the community. Never were sharper claws hid beneath pussier cushions.

II

In the realm of religion, things have fallen pretty much into the hands of one of the four big interests—"enlightenment." Here the specialist stalks through the land unmolested. Thus far the plain people have been less a prey to Enlightenment than the clergy, and only the initiated are disturbed when one reads in our most modern authority such a paragraph regarding the Apostle Paul as this: "The peculiarity of the mysticism which arises out of the Apocalyptic is that it does not bring the two worlds into contact in the mind of the individual as Greek and Mediaeval mysticism did, but dovetails one into the other, and thus creates for the moment at which the one passes over into the other, an objective, temporarily conditioned mysticism. This, however, is available only for these who by their destiny belong to both worlds. Eschatological mysticism is predestinarian."

Now I know this, and the distinguished author knows it, but did St. Paul know it? Tolstoi once wrote: "It is the worst of educated men that they cannot speak about any great question till they have read everything

that has been written about it, for fear that some one should say, 'But have you read Schwartzenburg?' Then, if they have not read Schwartzenburg, they are done."

But the moment one starts upon the business of "reading up" in religion, he finds Schwartzenburgs springing up like mushrooms in the night, and he falls at once into the hands of special interests. For example: Comparative Religion has been maintaining for years a most insidious lobby against the faith once delivered to the Saints. It is battenning on the credulous. Of all the interests which despoil the innocent of their rights, comparative religion is the most arrogant.

One can get on very well with his religion till he starts to reading up. It is the Schwartzenburg interests which undo him. One recalls how under one of these benevolent specialists he was first let in on the ground floor of some rich vein of discovery which Comparative Religion had just struck in Asia Minor.

One month there fell into my hands, the current *Hibbert Journal*, Gilbert Murray's *Four Types of Greek Religion*, and Schweitzer's *Paul and His Interpreters*, and I was tossed helplessly about among a number of mutually

exclusive theories of Christianity. One Heitmuller, with unctuous consideration for weaker minds, as if loath to break distressing news, yet firmly as who should say, "You must sooner or later be told and who better than I to soften the news,"—Heitmuller admits us into the garish light of the most modern discovery when he tells us that our beloved Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is merely an expansion of the ancient Pagan custom of eating one's God in order to obtain the God's special virtue.

Trembling in every article of my creed, I cut the pages of my *Hibbert Journal*, hoping for some word of denial of this terrible report from Germany, and lo! I am again regaled with the "Peter versus Paul" explanation of the New Testament, and its hard sayings are convincingly explained by a theological quarrel in the college of the Apostles.

But my card has been in the circulating library awaiting the return of Schweitzer's *Paul and His Interpreters*, and just as I am about to throw up the flag of surrender before the bombardment of light from the specialists in Comparative Religion, behold Schweitzer comes to my rescue with battalion upon bat-

talion of footnotes, Schwartzenburgs, Kabishes, Gunkels, Maurenbreckers, and the rest, all in battle-array, to smash the lines of Comparative Religion. The battle over, I venture forth wounded in spirit; but at least my Sacrament is safe. But I am not yet out of the hands of the Special Interests. Schweitzer, too, must have his little fling, and I am now let in for eschatology, which is his mollifying mixture of scholarship and orthodoxy. Again I begin to see the thing single and whole. Why had I not seen it before? There it is, clear as daylight, between the lines of the Gospels.

If only the specialists would let the matter rest there, all would be well, but I have a friend who goes seriously into this business of reading up and whose religion is pitched to the highest key of Modernism. He finds me poring over my Schweitzer and rather patronizingly asks, "But have you read Reitzenstein?" Whereupon, refusing further to face the light, I reach for my Borrow, hoping to find sanctuary in his eighteenth-century evangelicalism, unchilled as yet by Schwartzenburgs. My solace comes from *The Bible in Spain*. The Schoolmaster of Cohares had been telling Borrow

that he had a copy of the New Testament in his possession which Borrow desired to see; but on examining it he says: "I discovered it was only the Epistle by Pereira, with copious notes. I asked him whether he considered that there was harm in reading the Scriptures without notes: he replied that there was certainly no harm in it, but simple people, without the help of notes, could derive little benefit from Scripture, as the greatest part would be unintelligible to them; whereupon I shook hands with him, and, on parting, said that there was no part of Scripture so difficult to understand as those very notes which were intended to elucidate it, and that it would never have been written if not calculated of itself to illumine the minds of all classes of mankind."

What damaging opaqueness to Enlightenment, but how in secret we envy his smug detachment from Modernism. I am not decrying scholarship as an aid to the study of religion, but if one is to keep his House of Faith in perfect repair he must be ever on the alert to catch the latest Schwartzenburg on the wing.

III

But there is a group of Special Interests with interlocking directorates which ought to be indicted for conspiracy in restraint of morals and religion. They have won almost complete control of the press, schools, and politics, and they are beginning to invade the churches with their efficiency tests. Sociology is one of these interests. It started its benevolent career as meek as any missionary. That is the way with the interests until they obtain certain valuable concessions. Sociology seemed amiable enough until it began to set forth certain cubist conceptions of morals and to meddle with religion.

Prince Hohenstiel-Schwangau did not include religion among his special interests, but he did mention philanthropy. Philanthropy, with its kindred sciences, is certainly a pampered interest battenning on tax-ridden religion and government franchises. It is dictating terms to our churches, exacting time and tribute from the clergy, rewriting our theology, and today is robbing us of our last ancestral relic,—the sense of sin.

In the short Catechism the obligations involved in man's duty toward his neighbour are

set forth with the frankness and precision of the out-and-out realist. There they are, just as we meet them in real life: obedience to the law; to keep my hands from picking and stealing and my tongue from evil-speaking, lying, and slandering; to keep my body in temperance and chastity; not to covet or desire other men's property; but to learn and labour to get mine own living, and to do my duty in that state of life unto which it shall please God to call me.

The programme thus set forth is matter-of-fact and unscientific. Nothing is said about inheritance or environment, wages, or cubic feet of air-space affecting chastity. The fascinating problem of responsibility which we are impotent to solve, it does not undertake to handle. The Catechism does not attempt to explain exhaustively why people go wrong. It goes no further into psychology than the warning that it is impossible to live a clean, honourable, and Christian life without Special Grace, which we "must learn at all times to call for by diligent prayer." There is, you see, a decent tactful restraint in this old-fashioned treatment of sin. It saves our self-respect and also our morality.

But the soft-hearted philanthropists feel a more anxious concern for humanity than did the writers of the Catechism. Little Emily, now famous through the investigations of the State Senate Vice-Investigating Committee of Illinois regarding the relationship between wages and prostitution, is taught by the most modern school of philanthropy not to call upon God by diligent prayer if she would preserve her chastity, but to call upon Brown, Jones & Company for higher wages, and the state legislature for a minimum-wage law.

I shall not undertake to deny that wages and prostitution, ventilation and morals, food and faith, shelter some common factor; but in the interest of decency, the fact must not be over-emphasized. The last rag of respectability to which the sinner desperately clings is a sense of sin. Rob him of that and you have robbed him of his good name. He has sold his birthright and is no longer a child of God. Little Emily on the witness-stand, unless betrayed by the sociologist, does not wish the world to think that her chastity is an affair which rests entirely with labour legislation.

Here is my quarrel with so many of the public-service sciences. They are robbing us of

our self-respect. St. Paul's psychology was more true to human nature, and far more chivalrous. There is a mechanical side to morals, as eugenic experts and the futurists in morals undertake to show; but they have overcapitalized the shabby fact.

In one of the late art exhibitions, I was brought to pause before a futurist cow. The picture called for a radical readjustment of my old-fashioned notions of fitness of form and figure. Were cows really made in such dissonant, warring entanglements of lines and surfaces? But the next time I visited my dairy I caught my best Ayrshire in the very act of reproducing the futurist attitude—its massive spreading back in veritable imitation of those awkward masses. There, behold, was the cubist cow in all her garish disregard of classical detail, flaunting her futurism in my face! Had she too been to the art exhibition, and had I here proof of Oscar Wilde's contention that Nature slavishly copies art?

My quarrel with the futurist was that he had betrayed me. He had taken my best Ayrshire and with his foul wand converted her into a cubist monster. Henceforth I must wander through dairy and pasture seeing cubist bo-

vines where once Nature exulted in comely masses of tans and brownish reds spreading in graceful surfaces upon the grounds.

Something like this is happening all the while at the hands of our specialists,—neurologists, criminologists, psychologists, sociologists, and the rest. They betray the confidence placed in them. In certain matters they speak with authority. They have a truth but they overcapitalize it. They have read Schwartzenburg, taken time-reaction tests, gathered statistics relating to wages, ventilation, prostitution, sewage, tenement-house dimensions, child culture and infant mortality; then they begin to generalize about life.

The cow in some respects does resemble the cubist presentment of her, but has she not other delightful appearances as well? Why tarry in the slough of an occasional degrading fact? The futurist, riding his mechanical truth, has failed to grasp the cow's real æsthetic intention and the redemptive lines of her beauty. In clothing one of our dear old racial possessions in the odious garment of his special idea, he has outraged and betrayed us.

IV

None of the Special Interests can rightly be called predatory until it allies itself with government. Here is the real stigma attached to sugar, oil, and other odious specials which have brought the so-called "Interests" into bad repute. But of late Philanthropy has been despoiling the interests of their most facile weapon, taxation. St. Francis no longer takes the open road bent upon errands of mercy. He light-heartedly boards a tram for the Halls of Legislation. That is the simplest way "to fix the matter up." Instead of helping our neighbour in the old-fashioned way, modern philanthropy is more constructive. It is teaching him to go to the public treasury and help himself.

Mind you, there is nothing indecorous about these newer interests,—none of the rough scrambling for concessions as among the old money barons under the robust régime of plutocracy. All is courteous and generous-minded. The advocates of the six-hour day for workingmen graciously wave forward the advocates of the eight-hour day with: "After

you. There is enough to go round and plenty for everybody."

Any theory is harmless so long as it good-naturedly submits to the law of the survival of the fittest. That is the real gospel of Democracy. Everybody given a chance, and everybody a good listener. Since religion accepted these terms, it has been getting along amicably with its neighbours. We have abolished the rack, and instituted the religious quarterly and Parliaments of Religion. Conflicting theories can fight the matter out in debate till everybody is convinced or bored and no particular harm is done. It is the *subsidized* theory which is dangerous. If, for example, Comparative Religion were to add to its arrogant demeanour the ancient weapon of the law, we should think it highly predatory. Fortunately, Schwartzenburg has not gone into politics.

We must treat some of the pretentious chivalry of the Special Interests with restrained admiration. There is a skeleton in their closet. Brotherly love, on which the Public Service sciences are builded, presupposes sacrifice. But "love, justice, self-sacrifice," as Nietzsche points out, "are generally praised by the wrong

people. You talk of self-sacrifice," he exclaims to his contemporaries, "but you have nothing to sacrifice. You are weak persons who desire that others should sacrifice themselves to you."

Heretofore the Millennium has been deemed a spiritual task. It involved a cross. Religion has, in the past, bred men and women extravagantly willing to pay for their unselfish dream out of their own earnings. Martyr's blood has enriched the programme of the saints. But the Millennium is now in the hands of less robust teachers. It is no longer the gospel of sacrifice, but a dexterous triumph of legislation.

There is many a facile programme for bringing in the kingdom of happiness here on earth. We are persuaded that if only we can get more—more health, more money for our labour, more comforts and plan—we shall have solved our problems and supplied our moral deficiencies. But, despite our restless efforts for the common good, we are not made brothers. The disintegrating forces of envy and suspicion are tearing at the heart of life. The special interests of the "have-nots" do battle with the special interests of the "haves," and while both

are "cajoling and cudgeling the state" into granting concessions, they cleave us further asunder.

"The atmosphere of a common will" can come not by the monopoly of any special interest nor yet by magnanimous concessions to pity, but by the regenerating power of a great idea. Religion claims this power. But she too, in the lean seasons of her loyalty, became a special interest. Then Humanitarianism undertook the neglected task. Because her chivalrous intention led us to expect the best, we will not accept from her a meagre millenium of loaves and fishes for the poor.

We have lately seen how, in England, a new patriotism inspired by the war has welded together the dissenting and predatory groups into self-forgetful servants of the state. Religion, if we despair not of her, will yet again lift us out of our separate interests and make us partners in the tasks of life.

III

REFLECTIONS OF AN ABANDONED FARMER

SINCE first reading Horace's charming Odes upon salads, I have been a devotee of country life. That was in my youth while I still lived in the city. Since then I have raised salads for the market and have tried to make lettuce and cucumbers pay. I have eaten the tender, succulent things under my own vine and fig tree, but not in that singleness of mind projected by the ancient poets.

In those days a salad was a spiritual thing. It was compounded of Etrurian zephyrs and cooling dews—Hybla bees for neighbours. It was chastely guarded by peaceful peasants and was the special care of tender goddesses.

It was not until I took over the raising of salads for profit that I became aware of a lack in the realism of Horace. Not a word had the poet said about grubs and blight and "hired help."

Farming as a pursuit of idealism is not an

affair of broad acres. It is a state of mind. The happiest farm in the world, and I venture to say the most successful, may be had in any city apartment on a winter's night before a blazing log and a shelf of books on "Apple Raising," "How to Make Hens Pay," and "Where to Grow Alfalfa." Here the weary business man may stake out a claim and get close to the soil. No capital is required and no experience. In these matters experience is likely to breed a cynicism which will defeat the simple happiness of fireside farming.

The luxury of this spiritual type of agriculture is that it is free from all sordid and clogging detail. We are not making a business of it. We had made a business of other things and found them spiritually wanting. In the city we were growing peevish and anxious over trifles. It was the heart's thirst for space and detachment that set our faces towards the country. So at the end of our nervous day, we took sanctuary from our disquietude in "Waugh on Apples" and "Farm Management." After perusing the pile of monthly bills, there was refreshment in the phrase, "raising what we eat." What delicious cool we found beneath those spreading oaks in

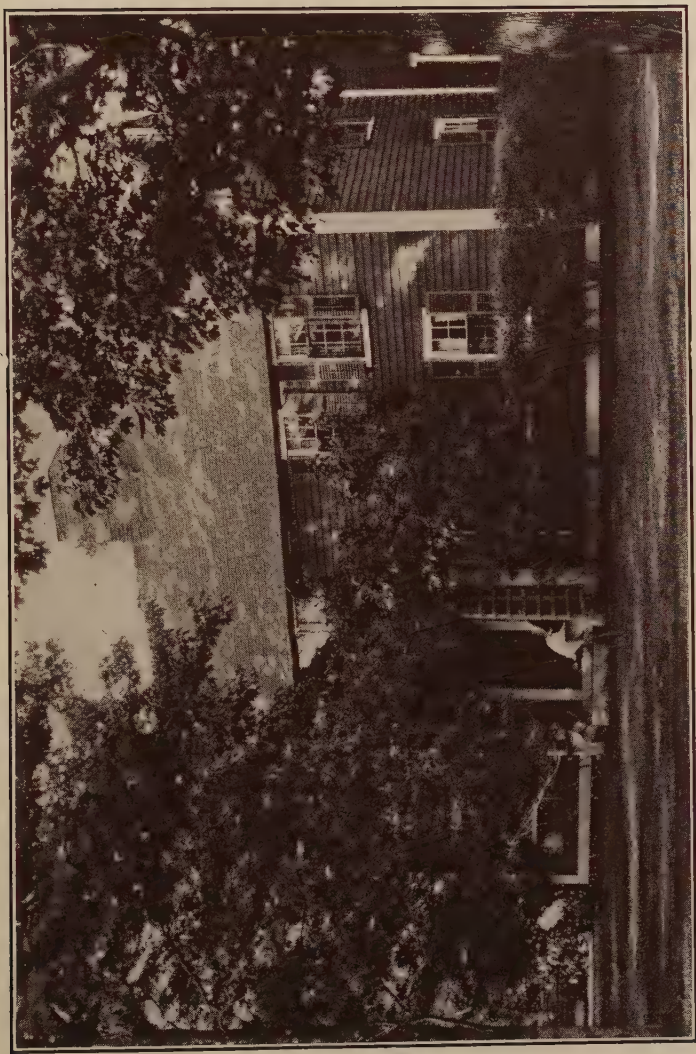
imaginary door-yards as loyal yeomen came bringing in the sheaves.

Then one day we made our venture of faith. We exchanged the fireside farm for a thing of acres. We beat our city comforts into pruning hooks and ploughshares.

Life at Newport, at the height of the season, is bovine simplicity in comparison with the life of a farmer. I mean the farmer who goes in for peace of mind as a crop. However, by skill or chance we may make the farm pay, it is a dismal failure if it disappoint our dream of the simple life. We had wiped the city dust from our feet in search for higher satisfactions. Were the farm to fail us in this regard, our last estate would be worse than the first; for we should stand as one wounded in the house of his friends.

Herein, so often, lies the tragedy of farming when entered upon as a spiritual venture. People, nowadays, take to the farm in much the same mood as, in more troubled times, men took to the monastery. Farming to such is more than a hobby; it is a religion; for it symbolizes the protest of the soul against bondage to "things."

It was at a spring exhibition of the Salon



THE HOUSE ON THE PEABODY FARM

that I first became interested in apple-raising. Frieseke's apple blossoms set me on the quest of orchards. Think of raising as the business of life a crop of this ethereal, tantalizing beauty! Little did I then know of the horrid possibilities of an apple blossom.

An orchard in spring was once to me a holy thing. I sought the poets for wealth of words to spell the joy of that swaying mass of loveliness. That was before scab and aphis, blight and lice had been added to my daily vocabulary. Now, the coming of that holy hour when acres of swaying blossoms kiss one another in the breeze heralds the approach of the most anxious season of the year. It is a summons to be up and doing. Spray nozzles must be hurried out of their cobwebbed seclusion. Great tanks of lime-sulphur are rolled across the lawn and begoggled farm-hands bear down upon those heavenly fields. In the interval from the first fugitive suggestion of pink till the last petal is sent shivering on the wind these tender buds must four times be drenched in noxious fumes.

I recall the shock with which I first read the pomologist's "Orchard Calendar." With what Teutonic thoroughness these slaves to fact had

desecrated my calendar of the good old days of fireside farming! It used to run thus:

Last of April, boughs take on a delicate green.

May first, leaves full blown.

May seventh, first pink of apple blossoms.

Middle of May, orchard like heaven.

Two weeks later, blossoms fall.

I have long since laid aside this romantic calendar and one published in Amherst now stands, menacing me, on my desk:

Early spring as buds are breaking, spray for scale, aphid, and fungus diseases.

Just before blossoms open, spray for moth, aphid, and scab.

Within a week after petals fall, spray for everything.

Four weeks later, spray for moth, worm, scab, and lice.

Where once we talked about rare June days, now, quite naturally we speak of good spraying days. Anxiety over spray materials and "hired help" have read a new meaning into Friesen's apple blossoms. I have eaten of the tree of knowledge.

The most serious handicap of genuine farming, as compared with fireside agriculture, is

that the former does not permit the enjoyment of weather for its own sake. Climate is always a secondary good or evil. The hay is spoiling because of the rain, or the corn is going to be ruined on account of the drought. Rain or shine, something is bound to suffer. Oh, for the good old days when sunshine and rain and wind were just "weather"!

In one profitable respect my farming was a success. There was a plentiful crop of earnest reflections. Morally, it was worth the experiment.

Until embarking upon agriculture, I had thought that I understood the implications of the Christian teaching concerning "detachment from things." Any properly ordained minister is supposed to have mastered the technique of this elementary doctrine of our religion. Not until I moved into the country did I see that I had been skimming only the surface of the great truth. Herein is the mystery of the so-called "simple Gospel teaching." It takes either a saint or a sinner to measure its sweeping implications. Not being a saint, I was compelled to earn my understanding otherwise. It came to me by way of apple raising.

When I found that I was losing my zest for

apple blossoms, I knew that all was not right within me; so I fell to overhauling the precepts of my religion. Like most people, I had fondly supposed that the battle for detachment and simplicity is less keen in the country than in the "busy marts of trade." Sherry's, to a superficial observer, looks more worldly than a farm in Vermont at the height of the haying season. Pretty books sometimes write as if scenery can make moral muscle. Give our bodies an open sky and our souls some breathing space and all will be well within us. Closeness to the soil should change a race of anxious Marthas into Millet peasants.

Then suddenly the truth came to me. It was on one of those rare spraying days when I found myself upset by spray materials, and the indolence of farm help. "Things" were getting on my nerves. Not the same things, to be sure, which I had often moralized over and had tried to move away from. This time it was grubs and blight, bad weather and inefficient help. Different things, to be sure, but "things" nevertheless.

Could it be then that detachment, after all, is wholly a problem of the will and that the battle is as hard in one place as another?

Heretofore, like most parsons, I had been interpreting the menace of "things" to mean vulgar things, which I had not particularly cared for—the plush and baubles of life for which silly people barter away their peace of mind. It had not occurred to me that a man may lose his soul quite as effectually among beautiful things as among the sordid and vulgar. Beautiful surroundings do not reduce the moral risk so materially as some sociologists suppose. St. Augustine, who was a pretty shrewd observer of human nature, expressed a doubt whether many clergymen could get into heaven. A rough assault that upon the environment argument!

Sunsets and ripening grain and hay-cocks in an orchard are truly beautiful to beautiful souls, but they can no more save a man's soul than can skyscrapers and elevated railways kill the spirit. A grub can be as mind-disturbing as the buzz of factory wheels and city smoke. What is more beautiful than a garden of perennials? But how one can worry, if one chooses, over hollyhocks and iris!

The awful sin, wherever we live, is to let "things" spoil our apple blossoms for us. That is just what is happening every day to people

who have fled to the country as well as to city dwellers. We can blast the most beautiful gifts of God by a wrong attitude. We are continually turning the rarest bits of heaven into "things."

Take the joy of parenthood. How we can waste its precious hours, now that child-life is something to be studied, by regarding our children as objects with careers, prospects, and capacities, to be worried over, instead of blessings to love and enjoy! We have seen parents and teachers puckering their brows over backward children as if stupidity were a crime. What a pity to make ourselves and our children unhappy because they happen to be dull! They cannot help it, poor dears, and neither can we. And, after all, what a stupid world this would be if all the people in it were clever. Our nursery orchards are getting to be all spray and preventives. Why not keep the apple blossoms?

Herein, too, is the weakness of organized religion. People get to fussing over it instead of enjoying it, as they should. I have often wondered whether it was not a grave mistake ever to have organized so sensitive a thing as religion. It was necessary, of course, but we

must pay the penalty of continually seeing it reduced to the status of "things."

I fear that most of our churches are not keeping the scent of blossoms as effectually as they might. No sooner are we happy over our religion than along comes somebody with a passion for bigness and building, and away goes the scent of Spring. Just as we settle down to enjoy our church-going, there bears down upon the parish the secretary of one of the many "religious movements." He demands to see our Christian evidences. Are we 100 per cent efficient? Of course we are not and we are forthwith made to feel ashamed of our lack.

The serenity of the religious life of our town was spoiled for a year by our weakly yielding to a "house to house canvass" campaign. A secretary swooped down upon us demanding that we be up and doing. The air was sulphurous with statistics, programmes, and men's dinners. Secretaries of organizations whose business it is to "promote" Christianity are a terrible menace to apple blossoms.

I like to remember that St. Francis always kept the scent of flowers about his religion. That is why we love him.

IV

ON WIDENING THE MARGIN ¹

BOOKS have not always had a margin. If we were to go back to the beginning of the Middle Ages, we should find a book to be a plain and uninviting object. The page was packed as full with writing as the frugal pen of the copyist could effect. There was no colour, no contrast of big and little letters, no broad, white spaces to rest the eye.

One day there came a change. There were as many different kinds of monks copying manuscripts as there are school-boys and girls. Some cared a great deal about the quality of the work which left their hands. Some of them did not care at all. Some worked so many hours and then prayed so many hours, and their work was done; while for others, work itself was a continual prayer to God.

A German philosopher, whose name we have frequently heard of late, once wrote, "The

¹ This paper was read to girls graduating from Miss Porter's School in Springfield, "THE ELMS."

thoughts which change the world come on doves' feet." As noiselessly as the treading of a dove, art found its birth in one of those Benedictine cells. One day there emerged from the soul of one of these Cluny monks, copying saints' legends, the desire to make his work beautiful. Mere copying, mere bookmaking, did not satisfy. He wanted to make a wonderful book, a book filled with pages which would catch the eye and set the soul singing with colour. So he set apart a little space all around the page; this he called the margin. On its clean and golden surface he began to draw wonderful things which had been making music in his heart—illuminated letters in gold and scarlet, pictures in lovely blues, those Pre-Raphaelite blues, wrung from the deep, clean spaces of heaven where angels weave their robes.

As time went on he grew bolder at his art. He widened the margin more and more—squeezed moments out of his busy day for the making of beautiful pages. Mr. Morgan may have paid fabulous sums of money for some of these wonderful books. The man who first made books with margins aglow with beauty was not thinking about money. What he

wanted to do with his life, hid away in a cell, was to *give away* something to God and to men that was not paid for. He was doing his work better than he was obliged to do it. It was this which made him an artist.

I am going to ask your attention this evening while I speak to you about the margin, wide or narrow, which you are going to set aside for the beautiful things which you purpose to give away to the God of life.

The significant thing about margins, which I wish you always to bear in mind, is that no taskmaster or timekeeper with a whip stood over the monk who invented beautiful books. The making and decorating of margins was a labor of freedom and love. The monk, as he sat in his Gothic window pencilling angels on the clear border of the page, was not compelled to drape his letters in blue and gold and scarlet. He did his page so much better than he needed. It was the region of the "not needed," the giving of things away—that is our point.

The effect of this "everlasting effort of man to do better than he need is the most exhilarating mystery of life." The joy found in such labour is the thing best worth having in life. So I have chosen to speak to you about it as

you are preparing to enter the world's workshop.

The happiest people in the world are artists. Everyone wants to be happy. It hurts to be miserable, and it is tragic to be bored. Artists are seldom miserable and they are never bored. I do not mean by an artist merely one who paints pictures or pencils his thoughts in marble. Nor do I mean by happiness that disheveled existence of the Latin Quarter of flowing ties, ill-fitting clothes, and badly fitting morals of Du Maurier's charming pen. The artists whom I purpose to talk to you about are the sort that anybody may become—people the world over, gifted folk, and men and women barren of talent, girls who work in factories, and Jane Austens penning lines for immortality, overworked teachers and underworked parsons, anybody, clever or dull, good or naughty, wise or simple, who is weaving into the fabric of his life more excellence, courage, more love than the world asks of him. Such an one is an artist in living, because all that inspires us today to try, all that saves our world from a cruel and drab monotony and makes the soul sing though the muscles ache, is the result of what that kind of people have

done with their lives. First, we shall speak about the margin for excellence; then, the margin for goodness, and, finally, of courage in endurance. We are first, then, concerned with *work*.

Those who are here this evening who are employers of labor will testify what an utterly adorable person is the man who goes out of his way to do his work better than he is compelled to do it. I have a Greek working for me in my garden, Demosthenes by name, who is on the verge of a serious breakdown because of the strain which he is giving his nervous system in his zeal to time precisely the dropping of the hoe with the blowing of the whistle. The human frame, even that of a Greek, is too sensitive for the repeated shocks of such expeditious quitting. As a gardener he is not an artist.

I once wrote an essay which a reputable magazine was kind enough to publish, entitled, "The Seven Worst Sermons." It was a confession of personal adventure in the art of sermon writing. I recently regretted that I had not delayed the publication of my article, for a few Sundays ago I made the unwilling discovery of number eight. The text of the ser-

mon was taken from the beautiful discourse in St. John's Gospel on the Good Shepherd. The preacher possessed the thrifty talent of speaking without notes or ideas. The sermon was about sheep—just plain mutton. But so felicitously did he play upon the habits of sheep and woolly lambs and Palestinian shepherds, dangers from wolves and hazards of storm, that the fleeting moments sped all too quickly.

The flaw in the art was that it was a sermon upon animal husbandry, not upon religion and life. Preaching for twenty minutes upon religion is a very exacting task. Talking about sheep, I suspect, is easier. But with his convenient gift of utterance, this preacher will probably go on to the end of his ministry without having preached a real sermon, and, if he is clever enough, his congregation will find no fault with him. They will keep their eyes pinned upon him during those entertaining twenty minutes while he discourses upon sheep. How different this shoddy type of service from that act of creation which Emerson describes, when out of the deep places of the soul thoughts are born while the head is hot and the feet grow numb with cold.

In the city of Havana the excursionist is

shown a plain little building which served as a laboratory for the two American doctors who gave their lives in the work of cleansing Cuba from the plague of yellow fever. You are familiar with the story—one which may well be written in letters of gold in American history for every boy and girl to read. In order to discover the habits of the germ-carrying mosquito, these physicians permitted themselves to be bitten by the insects which had already taken the blood of yellow-fever patients. Tremendous risk was necessary. For the sake of science, they took that risk, and died. That I call sheer beauty, written in that white margin of life where stands the Cross of Calvary. They did their work infinitely better than they were obliged to do it. What an intolerable world this would be had there been only quack workmen, and loafers, and sharp people who aim just “to get by” with their shoddy produce! To find the true measure of a man, scan the margin he leaves for work he is joyously giving away for the embellishment of life and the glory of God.

Now, it stands to reason, that you cannot do your work better than you need if you have not any real work to do. The man who sits on a

barrel and whittles, or the woman who just shops, is not likely to find stimulus to become a better whittler or shopper. Inherent in such tasks there is little dignity to promote zeal.

I am thankful that we are nearly through with that type of English novel in which none of the heroes ever does an honest day's work. As soon as Mrs. Humphry Ward goes to her well-earned rest, we shall have quite finished with this fascinating late Victorian rubbish. You are familiar with these chronicles of well-groomed heroes and heroines, people of large leisure, with nothing to do but to spend the money which they did not earn—an idle, handsome, worthless lot. Any modern novelist knows that you cannot make a hero out of just beauty, clothes, and love. People cease after a time to be even physically attractive if there is not in their temperament something of the artist's attitude toward work. It is the doctors, teachers, engineers, creative business men, scholars, and artists, all aglow with the love of work, some kind of work, who are really fitted to be loved. It is a fine support to morals that the novelist has discovered the fact. I am glad that the modern novel finds its heroes of romance in working men and women.

I say "women." I wish that I knew what ought to be said here. The gravest problem for the feminist to solve, the real woman question, is that there does not appear to be work enough to "go around." The girl whom I supremely pity is the one who has gone for a few years to a really healthy school or college where there is a genuine love of excellence, and then, after graduation, goes back to a home where there are a mother and perhaps three sisters in addition to the requisite servants. That young woman has the hardest spiritual problem to solve that falls to the lot of man, namely, how to save the soul and make life worth the living without a job.

Any parish clergyman, and many doctors, know how tragic the problem is because so many people who are worried over their religion and health are souls stifled with idleness. There is not enough work in any modern home, if there are servants, for three or four capable women. What are we going to do about it? I wish that I knew. I have been asked that question by girls who were struggling to escape from the misery of idle homes. Perhaps the Chinese way of "thinning out" is not so cruel after all.

I congratulate, therefore, the girls to-night who either are compelled to work or are determined to do so: because for you is possible a knowledge of that exhilarating mystery which William Morris, the artist-craftsman, made a gospel of, the joy that comes from doing more splendidly than we need some of the world's beautiful work.

And reading is not work. I was sentenced last winter to spend a few months upon a tropical hotel piazza. Hotel piazzas and lobbies give fertile soil for seeds of degeneracy. How many potentially fine souls have been rocked into spiritual insensibility on hotel piazzas. The symbol of spiritual iniquity is made in Grand Rapids. Rocking, gently rocking! What aimless hours, talking about food, and clothes, and comfortable beds, and draughts, and our neighbours! Rocking and reading! Reading, I say, is not work.

I am not very deeply impressed by the statistics of our public libraries which inform us of the avidity with which young America is drinking culture from these free dispensaries of grace. Consider what per cent of the books which go into circulation are novels. Even the reading of very reputable novelists like Thack-

eray and Dickens is not work. I am inclined to believe that there was more than humor in Josh Billings' remark when he said: "I don't believe in too much reading. Reading rots the mind."

A boy or girl poring over algebra or one of the sciences or some handicraft is a different moral symbol from one "doubled up" over the *Saturday Evening Post*. There are immeasurable limits within which to expand our enthusiasm and to achieve excellence in scholarship or craftsmanship, but there can be no excellence in the reading of stories. Tugging hard at something which, ultimately, we shall take pride and joy in doing admirably is the only source of excellence. If ninety-nine per cent of the printed matter in the world were dumped into a vat and burned, we should all of us be better off. Idle people would then, as they gaped into space, feel and see the horrid thing as it is.

The Mohammedan prophet taught that women had not souls. So far as his observation went among the ladies of his acquaintance he was entirely right. The women whom he met in the Mohammedan world could not have had souls: for a large per cent of them were

drudges and the remainder idle toys. The soul does not expand either in work that is drudgery or in idleness. But the prophet ought to have gone further and said that the men did not have souls either: for the most of the men of the Mohammedan world were slaves and the rest were bestial idlers.

I am trying to bring to you the theory of "margins." Workmen find joy, workmen grow in skill and real character, life becomes worth the living for workmen, only when the kind of work that is done leaves room for a margin where they can give away to God something beautiful, some piece of excellence just for the joy of the doing.

The labour agitator is right when he calls the most of the labour of the modern industrial world slavery. And he is right when he calls all idle people, rich or poor, men or women, parasites: because neither drudges nor idle folk are doing anything with increasing excellence. There is not a margin in most of the modern factories for the making of beautiful things. Souls grow while men are making gifts of excellence to God—doing the thing better than they need. That first Benedictine monk who made books with margins and cov-

ered the margin with angels was doing the kind of work which, somehow, we shall all have to do before the world will be happy.

My Greek gardener, Demosthenes, had his morals ruined and lost his soul working nine hours a day in a tanning vat. If you have ever seen a tanning vat, you will agree with me that there is nothing about it to inspire workmen to draw angels in the margin of it. He learned to watch for the blowing of the whistle because his work, like so much of work in our factories, was slavery.

I cannot change that, nor can you, but what we *can* do is to choose for our life-work and encourage our children to choose for their life-work tasks really worth doing well, where there is a margin for originality and excellent and joyous gifts to God. Let somebody else be the drudge, and the quack, and the idler, and sharper, and the maker of shoddy fabrics; but let us save our souls, if we can, by the doing of work that is worth offering to God. So let us continue to say to ourselves and our children: "Let our work be fine work. Let it be work which will profit the world, and let us do it, as a gift to God, better than we need." That I

call drawing angels and illuminated letters in the margin of life.

It is a tragic thing that America is becoming so rich. It is going to mean so many boys and girls growing into joyless men and women, robbed of the happiness of making a living. During the earlier years of my ministry, I tried, as have all human persons, to take the sting out of that hard saying of Jesus that no rich man, without divine intervention, can enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. I am now inclined to believe that He meant just what He said. A day on Fifth Avenue persuades me that He did. It is a pretty desperate fact, but it is not so sad as the consequent fact that neither can the children of the rich enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Few prosperous fathers and mothers will permit their children to do sincere and beautiful work.

During the first months of the War a wave of idealism swept over the world, finding voice in regions unaccustomed to stirrings of the soul. The leisure class of Europe and England suddenly took to uttering poetry and religion. Worn-out young men, "mockers of the clubs," accustomed to gaze at life through

club windows, as they joined the colours, said: "There is something real and great to live for. We have found at last a man's job in life." At first we were deceived by these sudden conversions wrought by war. From ennui, self-indulgence, and idleness, the God of war had seemed to deliver the prosperous few. But I have listened long to hear that cry, "Now we have something real to live for," springing from the lips of the millions of workmen who must win or lose the War—the peasants who left their half-tilled fields and hungry children, or from the throats of the workmen leaving their tools at the bench. These men answered the call of country as they had answered many a call of God that had come to them, as with tied hands and blind eyes God's poor must grope through life; but long before the call to arms had come, work had redeemed their souls and made life worth the living.

It is not an argument for war that it gives the leisure class something to live for and that it prevents the prosperous from growing soft; but war has given us the unanswerable argument that peace and happiness come only to the people who are striving to write something beautiful out in the margin of life.

The most of life is "the doing of things which turn to dust in the doing." Do not let all of your life be that! Seize some real work! Do it splendidly well—better than you need! Make up your mind that you are going to put at least one illuminated letter in the margin for God and your children to judge you by! It is sometimes desperately hard for girls to find jobs in life. But insist upon finding them! Learn church embroidery, raise bees or cultivate a new kind of pansy, or, if worst comes to worst, go to your Rector and ask him to give you something hard to do that is really worth doing well. Thus you may discover what has been called the "exhilarating mystery of achievement."

But life is made up of more than work. The margin which we are going to leave on the page must be broad enough to contain types of beauty other than excellence in craftsmanship.

How to be good and yet attractive is an art which must finally be taught in the Sunday-schools. Goodness becomes beautiful just as work becomes excellent by virtue of its being generous. It is the question again of the "not needed," the better than required. Here, too, it is the plus something which counts.

Our goodness is so often a bad habit—one which we ought to break. You recall what the old peddler in *Jean Christophe* said about our habits: "They are the enemies of morality." By morality he must have meant goodness raised to a fine art—goodness becoming beautiful and expansive. So much of the goodness of the world is merely imitative. It has neither life nor originality. It is not the joyous giving of things away for the glory of God, as the monk in his cell gave away angels in gold and scarlet and blue. The monk really broke a bad habit when he insisted upon not going on to the end of his days making pages in the way in which they had always been made. He purposed to put in a margin where he could just let himself go and scrawl, in color and sweeping line, angels to his heart's content.

Do you know many good people who appear to be "just letting themselves go," making a dash for the things worth while, things which are true, and lovely, and just, and of good report? The elbows of good people so often point in, as though they were holding their generous impulses in leash. The most of us are no better than we are compelled to be. There is nothing startling in any of our generousities

Godward. It is really a pathetic thing to have all our friends know precisely what we are going to do and to be to-day, to-morrow, and for ever.

Russian novelists appear to delight in drawing characters who, now and then, do some inexplicable and startling deed. A man with no apparent motive may suddenly one day fly off and murder his grandmother. On the other hand, he may sell all his goods and start upon a pious pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Anything to get out of a moral groove!

Now, there is no charm or beauty about doing the good things which we are compelled to do—compelled by custom and respectability. That offering is all mechanical and automatic. It is a matter of bargain and pay. The surprising generousities, the romantic adventures for God, are marginal goodness—extra gifts and hours thrown in, not asked. It is out in this margin where Christianity works all of its miracles in character. This is where saints weave their halos and where the stories of chivalry are written. It is in this margin where all the really good people dwell, the sort of people who are more sincere, more courageous, more loving and lovable than they need be.

The most delicate story in the world about marginal goodness is, of course, the parable of the good Samaritan. What gives such exquisite flavour to the charity work of the Samaritan is the fact that what he did was all gratuitous work—everything done with more consideration than he was compelled to show. He was needlessly courteous, needlessly considerate. He was not compelled to give up his own horse and take time for minute directions to the innkeeper and then to come back to inquire. No modern charity organization could afford to employ such an agent. There is no room in a card catalogue for the gentle deeds he did. Yes, they might be written in illuminated letters around the margin.

Young people, if you are going to make your goodness charming and be happy in the doing of it, “pile it on thick.” Work in the margin where there is elbow room, and free, clean breathing space for the heart.

It is a help sometimes in our schemes of discipline to get a handy title for the thing which we aim to do. Once appropriately name our endeavour and the thing goes speeding along its way. How many forgotten and unknown men and women have been given strength to go on

tugging at their burdens and their sorrows because they have been taught to call their hardship a cross. It is as though they saw the Christ holding a lamp for them at the top of the long stairs.

So I was glad to find in that last book of Stephen Graham's on Russian life the chapter on "Podvigs." A podvig, he tells us, is the Russian name for an act of self-denial which the doer goes out of his way to do exceptionally well. It is a gift of the "not needed," like going two miles with the stranger who asks us to go only one, and the giving of the cloak also when only the coat is demanded. Mary's alabaster box was a podvig. So was the widow's mite. A friend of mine gave up buying an automobile that he might make a lavish gift to one of the war funds. That was a podvig. These deeds are like the drawing of angels out in the margin just to beautify the page. The Russian religion teaches that men save their souls and win Heaven by the doing of podvigs.

Now, really good people collect, as life goes on, podvigs just as boys collect stamps. There gets to be fun in gathering them. They wear them like a rosary around their necks, where they can tell them off to God. In times of

discouragement they know that they are there, and in dying they can lay their tired hands upon them. "This," they say, as they look into God's face, "is what we tried to do for *You*. Judge our deserts by these, for they are of the stuff of our visions and our faltering will to be like Christ."

What a horrible world this would be were there not thousands of such men and women going out of their way to make a finer thing of life than they need—writing extra letters in gold out in the white margin: overworked men and women fighting till they die for some poor shred of beauty which to them is honour. What homes they have made, clothing their children's souls with memories that sustain in seasons when the fire smoulders in the heart and the hands are tempted. Such may meet God upon equal terms, for, like Him, they have created good.

We have now come to the third form of marginal beauty—gifts of "the better than needed"—I mean courage in endurance.

I recently assisted in the pruning of an orchard. I confess that it seemed a very cruel and irrational proceeding. Just as some beautiful branch was making its way hopefully sky-

ward, off it must be nipped. If the tree had been given the privilege of questioning why it should have been thus tragically nipped in the bud, the copy-book answer would have been: "My dear young tree, it is best for you not to have your own way. Experience in fruit culture has taught that trees which are not 'let and hindered' by pruning are bound to grow ill-shaped and unfruitful. It is found that by nipping off a twig a vigorous branch shoots out just below the point of nipping. It is queer, but it's nature."

One of the facts of life which I have never been quite clear about, in spite of Browning, is that our moralizing does not tally with our prayers. I suppose it is because we pray with our hearts and moralize with our reason. We pray all of us to be delivered from evil and temptation. We want—oh, how much we want!—to be shielded, as we grope half blindly along life's way. But the moment we begin to moralize we say what a desperately unfortunate thing it is for character to be shielded; sorrow, disappointment, failure—these, we say, give pith to the soul and clear sight to the eye.

I confess to not seeing so clearly as some of

my brother parsons do the meaning of those black and purple threads which God weaves into our life's story. I am not keener than the Apostle who saw it all through a glass only darkly. I think that we may reasonably thank God each night if He has given us a day of sunshine, free of distress. And every morning, we may, without shuddering for our characters, repeat the Master's prayer to be shielded from the evil of life. Any parent, any teacher, follows a true instinct when he asks for those he loves that they may be spared some of the things in life we know.

But, whatever we think of the problem of evil, we know that most of the things which we ask we shall not get in life. Among the thousands of boys and girls graduating from our American schools during this month of June not even the most favoured is going to live the kind of life which now seems the happy, satisfying one. Life is going to be infinitely better than your best dreams—perhaps infinitely worse. Some things are bound to happen to us which we shall not understand. They will seem very cruel and very stupid. I am not going to be sentimental about failure and dis-

appointment, but what I am going to close with this evening concerns our treatment of that lean and arid portion of life where there can be no enthusiasm—only patience in endurance.

It is easy to write in the clean white margin illuminated letters and angels in gold and scarlet and blue when the will is wrestling joyfully with work which we love. It is easy to spend one's life making "podvigs"—that is, making some beautiful sacrifice for the glory of God. But if we are really going to be artists in living we must somehow put beauty, beauty everywhere—in every nook and cranny of experience. There must be a shining margin even on that page where tears have blotted the writing. The illuminated letters may be in purple, but they must be illuminated.

Even here we can be the artist by doing the thing better than we need. We can show more courage, a finer spirit and cheerfulness, than custom and friends exact.

It is the tender but dangerous experience that when we most need warning no one will speak to us of our duty and opportunity. We are permitted, in time of trouble, to take sanctuary from criticism. People will not tell us

that we are selfish and that we are foolish. All that is asked of us is that somehow we just "pull through."

But even here we may be sure that God is judging us by the beautiful things which we put in the margin.

It is splendid to work as the artist works, giving our radiant energy for excellence's sake. It is superb to burn one's life out in glorious sacrifice for a great cause as does the saint and martyr, great and humble. But I think that it must be most beautiful of all in God's sight when, like the widow, we have nothing to give but a mite of patience as we face the things that come not of our choosing—to offer that patience bountifully and in cheerfulness. Whatever may happen, wherever you are—

Work for the soul's sake.

That all the clay of you, all of the dross of you,

May yield to the fire of you,

Till the fire is nothing but light,

Nothing but light.

After the fashion of our human speaking,
"The Elms" closes its doors to-night. You are
the last class to be graduated from this school.
The air is so surcharged with feeling and

memories that to avoid the saying of words which may jar, one is tempted to be silent.

One thing we may say—the doors of any genuine school, once opened, never can be closed. What real work has once been done here is done for all time.

The founder and teachers of this school have loved excellence. They have striven, sometimes against perverse homes, for the discipline of “the not needed,” the extra letters in life. Miss Porter and Miss Bostwick have willed that the work done here should have a generous margin; a beauty and sincerity more than patrons required. It has meant nerve, wear, and courage, and the courting of failure.

We thank them to-night for these illuminated letters which they have added forever in the margin of the page.

V

THE USES OF THE COMIC SPIRIT IN RELIGION

THE author of *Sandra Belloni*, in one of his delightful moments of taking his readers into his philosophic confidence, remarks:

“Man is a laughing animal, and at the end of infinite search the philosopher finds himself clinging to laughter as the best of human fruit, purely human and sane and comforting.”

Certainly we are all of us more real if, in laughing with the author through his charming pages of “unreason and sentimentalism exposed,” we have heard his sermon aright. Who, after the *Egoist*, can attitudinize before life without a blush at finding the Comic Muse looking over his shoulder with a quizzical smile on her sparkling countenance.

If laughter be among the lesser spiritual graces as compared with faith, it is none the less of honorable lineage as an instrument of reform. Not till a ripple of “thoughtful laugh-

ter" has been evoked, can any reform get far along its healing way. New epochs have always been ushered in in the tingling atmosphere of wit. Cervantes, Erasmus, Rabelais, each has laughed at his generation to its lasting benefit. The age of sluggish wit is likely to be an age of shallow religion, sentimentalism, and sham.

It has been remarked that the gods of the Romans were eminently respectable but very dull and prosaic persons. It might at the risk of irreverence be said that in general the gods of the world have been made to appear too austere. We have tried to endow Divinity with our own best behavior, and in our solemn moments of defining Deity, have quite overlooked that cosiest corner of the heart, into which the oblique rays of the Comic, slanting over our high altars, come freighted with matter for laughter. Because we are very grave of countenance when we speak of God, we imagine that there can be nothing about us that may seem comic to Him. But the omniscient heart in which the reverent have found, blended with pity and love, the eloquent scorn of the Gospels, must see in us queer beings, along with the tears and the tragedy: comic

incongruities upon which humour may beneficently flash and play. The ominous thought that God may laugh, would, had it occurred to us, have long since added an infinite touch of reverence to our prayers, and have purged us of our egoism. The moment that an age suspects that its manners may seem a bit ridiculous to God, an epoch hails its end.

Reformers are skilled in using every other weapon except the nimble one which the Comic Muse graciously offers. We have had irony and satire, burning indignation and withering contempt. We have had humour with velvet touch coddling the offender, and graciously apologetic for venturing within detached and holy precincts. But keen laughter, straight from the brain, at the sheer drollness of our little unreasons and sentimentalisms—the intelligence quivering to discern our absurdities and pretensions, our hypocrisies and affectations, our pomposities and acquired solemnities—this, alas, only too rarely.

The true religious liberal has this distinction of spirit—a gift of the comic intelligence; he keeps his temper in controversy. Any man who loses his temper over religion has at once become helplessly orthodox. In his fervour of

defence he has pitched backward into the enemy's camp, and has forfeited his usefulness as a member of the society for the prevention of bigotry. There is something tragically ludicrous in two religions hating each other for the love of God.

When Kingsley lost his temper over the devious progress of Newman's faith, Newman with calculated restraint wrote the *Apologia*. Tyrrell's well-tempered reply to the ponderous rebuke of Cardinal Mercier is the *Medievalism*. Scorn is best answered in the civil vein. Had Kingsley set the Comic Muse on the trail of Tract 90 we might have been the poorer without our *Apologia*, but the confusion would not have been Kingsley's. The amenities of religious controversy must be dictated by the Comic Muse. Only kindly, illuminating laughter can keep order when impassioned convictions contend for the mastery.

Every piece of religious bigotry or sham has its comic side. Reality in its "shapeliness and honesty" precludes laughter. Unreality limps, squints, or drawls, wears cap and bells, without knowing it. We may make up our minds that we have not found the essence of unreality till we have found something which excites merri-

ment, solemn merriment though it be. Reform moves at so laggard a pace because a sense of the ridiculous is not one of the common graces. Outworn, dilapidated formulas or articles of religion are the meekest combatants. They crumble and shrink before a discerning smile. The Comic Spirit has argued down Calvin by mere refusal to attend, and by nodding during his harangues. Logic is no match for an awakened sense of the ludicrous. Cervantes never could have persuaded his generation by denunciation and tears that its literature was getting ridiculous, but the idea translated into terms of Don Quixote and his Squire made an admirable campaign document. One must have noted that by and by the season of argument in reform movements is past. The Comic has done her cleansing work, and with quizzical smile the combatants renounce the battle. Boredom has discredited many a false god.

Here is the joy of Erasmus—an efficient type of the religious reformer. He widened measurably the capacity of his age for the comic perception. When Erasmus, or an anonymous disciple, proposed to enlighten the Papacy touching its shortcomings, he let St. Peter and the Pope in for a dialogue at the

gate of heaven, and the showers of ridicule upon current controversy were tonic, like Alpine breezes.

When we read *The Praise of Folly*, we perceive what well-tempered weapon the sixteenth century brought into the service of reform, and in what a bracing intellectual climate controversy moved. The Comic Muse ushered in modernity with a smile. "Ritualism and ceremony, dogmatic theology and philosophy and personal character," were all thrown into the crucible of Erasmus's keen comic intelligence. His edition of the New Testament became the "best seller" of the week, with one hundred thousand copies hot from the press, going through the heart of Europe like a "polished rapier." The ponderous solemnities winced, and the audience held its sides. The joy of it was—the Holy Father gave his blessing, and members of the Sacred College were Erasmus's patrons. And he never lost his temper. He was as much at his ease exposing priestly foibles and hypocrisy as when writing those delightful letters to his patron Warham, or nudging some illustrious friend for a benefice or pension for his distinguished talents to repose upon. We shall not understand the

processes of the Protestant Reformation, or of any reformation, till we have considered the function of the Comic in the battle for spiritual directness and honesty. Wit seizes on sham as birds on prey.

Perhaps no vocations need the vigilant eye of the Comic Muse more than those which have undertaken the weighty business of administering the solemnities of life, for sentimentality hovers with claw and beak to do them injury. "Our souls must be on fire when we wear solemnity," says the writer on Comedy, "if we would not press upon his shrewdest nerve." Every Divinity School might well have in its senior year, along with courses in systematic divinity and homiletics, a course in the great masters of comedy; and, to arouse our sluggish wits and keep us on our guard, it might not be amiss to carve upon our pulpits, side by side with the lean Gothic saints, the figure of Aristophanes or Molière with warning finger. How one loves those laughing, indecorous imps one spies in Gothic cathedrals—safety valves of the comic perception of those bohemian journeymen-builders, signalling to posterity their conviction that piety at high Gothic tension needs always the vigilant eye of the Comic

Muse. Close beside the tragic and the sublime there is ever lurking in the affairs of men such stuff as comedy is made of.

Children are never ridiculous. The Comic finds in them no vulnerable point; which may help us to understand why Christ chose them as the favorite symbol of Christian attainment. The child thinks himself neither good nor bad. The false solemnities of his elders, their egotisms and pretensions, are foreign matters to him. He must become full grown before he would hide his poverty or expose his wealth. His grief is real and thoroughgoing, and he weeps without affectation.

The Comic is ever sensitive about giving the devil his due, and is a firm believer in the democratic doctrine that even fools have their rights. Few of us are really converted to the evil opinion of ourselves to which the liturgy commits us upon our solemn feasts and fasts. The Comic Muse understands the situation perfectly. While she outstrips even the clergy in probing our weaknesses and "pinking" us when we are offguard, she secretly admires us for being as good as we are. Some of our most disturbing faults require no heavier charge than laughter to wing them in their flight.

Where the Comic becomes an innovator in morals and religion is in her mellow conviction that men need not so much the prophet as the comedian; not to be scolded so much as to be laughed into a state of grace. Religion, now, is usually pitched at too high a key to undertake these humbler spiritual tasks. It takes us so seriously upon all occasions that we are likely to reflect its solemn visage and take ourselves more seriously than we ought. Even the more intimate concerns of the heart, our joys and sorrows, need the chastening of the comic presence.

Here are meaner offices for the Comic Muse. She begs to be allowed "to straighten up" our minds a bit before we open our weighty controversies over religion. Without becoming personal—she is too sophisticated for that—she attempts some preliminary repairs on manners and morals, by pointing out our egoisms, vanities, and self-delusions, revealing beneath a respectable veneer our weak underpinnings of character and the rotten rafters in our dispositions. She even intrudes upon some of the "hazy regions" of religion, and is impudent enough to ask just *what* we mean, confessing her obtuseness in such lofty matters, yet stub-

bornly claiming the right to police the precinct just the same.

She is fond of probing our exalted moods, and is merciless in touching the quick of any unreality or sham—courteously begging our pardon for interrupting our confession of faith. To have received her absolution before we venture to expose our souls to a more searching Presence, is no mean preparation for the reception of higher benefits. The chamber is swept and garnished, but not empty.

Not that the Comic Spirit may not find a vocation, humbler though it may be, in the mundane region of science and philosophy. The pursuit of TRUTH is a serious calling, and when, like that of religion, it threads its perilous path circumspectly, it soars into the empyrean well out of reach of the Comic; but when, presuming upon his high calling, the truth-keeper becomes arrogant, Comedy is hot on the trail. The late "scientific era" was solemn as an owl and pompous as a prelate. The ages when men have "pursued truth" have generally been too self-conscious to be keen of wit. It requires exquisite modulation of soul to walk with truth "unostentatiously, and choose to whisper not shout our creeds."

Hitherto it has been supposed that orthodoxy had monopolized complacent assurance, but of late heterodoxy and liberalism have been imitating their opponent's least admirable mood. The Comic is the only safe medium in which to apply "pure reason" to religion, for the reason needs constantly to be laughed out of its placid pretensions. Alone it is the bluntest weapon of reform. The most flagrant fault of the heretic is his lack of humour. He takes his intellect too seriously. Often heresy is truth merely *under-exposed*, and it is the function of common sense to perceive just when it is developed sufficiently to be presentable. We should do well to take on the Comic Muse, if we would pilot a safe course between orthodoxy and heresy.

The clergy and the whole company of idealists have always been easy prey for the Comic, because they handle explosive matter—the eternal discrepancy between "the aspirations and the occupations of men." In the collision of incompatible ideals—for civilization and the Gospel are in perpetual clash—fire is struck which may illumine for us, if we possess comic appreciation, many a sentimentalism and moral incongruity. We are most vulnerable

when we soar, for then we cut loose from our base of supplies—common sense. The land of enthusiasm is always uncharted, and we venture there at the risk of making fools of ourselves.

Religion pays for her idealism in ever bordering perilously upon the comic. Her most resourceful but dangerous gift is to touch the brain of man with a heavenly madness. It was not "much learning" which made Paul mad, but much Christianity. But the chasm between the glorious madness of Paul and that of Don Quixote is partly a question of comic perception. The Knight of La Mancha went forth with the vision unalloyed, spear in hand, only to have the windmills get the better of him. Paul contrived while earning a living to write a volume of immortal letters, make a missionary tour of the world, upset the Roman Empire, and "to do good unto all men."

The facile moods of sanity, balance, and common sense, are not the idealist's most efficient capital, but somewhere in his train, if he shall get on at all with the existing order, he needs his Sancho Panza and the Comic Muse. One of the sacred uses of Comedy is to relieve the tension in this highly charged atmosphere,

where the earthly and transcendent orders overlap, and where religion and the other sublimities thrive.

To see the vision and yet to be patient with imperfection; to feel the tragic breach between the City of God and the cities in which we live, and still to go on as hopeful workers with our awkward tools; to have our "conversation in heaven," and yet contrive to speak a dialect understood of men; to know that common sense is only common, of the earth, earthy, with no jurisdiction in heaven, and yet not to despise its use; to accept, without emasculating religion or despairing of culture, the blazing paradox of the Gospels, which seek while despising civilization to regenerate the world—to thread these perilous paths between earth and sky, one needs, along with glowing convictions, the lambent light of the Comic to guide his feet.

The founders of systems have for the most part succeeded in keeping their balance on these giddy heights while their followers have floundered helplessly in the absurd. Brook Farm was comic, but Emerson, who set going the spiritual impulse, was the first to see the joke. Tolstoi, with all reverence, was at times

tragically, sublimely comic; but Jesus, whom he sought to pattern, carved his path through contemporary Judæa so graciously as to open among us, age by age, new mines of awe and reverence for his attainment. God's idealism, we suspect, is patient.

There are infinite depths of comic appreciation in the Master's retort to the Pharisee regarding Cæsar's image on the coin. That was one of the tense moments in history in which enthusiasm and necessity conflict, the encounter bordering upon the tragic. Jesus relieved the pressure by opening the comic valve. Throwing logic and consistency to the winds, He fell back on civilization as offering just then the more amiable solution of a gratuitous problem. A grain less of humour would have entangled Him in noxious particulars—a constitution and a platform. A typical reformer similarly involved might have risked a pamphlet on Christian currency. Many a delicate but profitless issue can be avoided by the comic perception.

But by no means does the Comic preclude our reverence for the glorious failures in this tragic struggle, our John the Baptists and our Tolstoïs. They are punctuation marks in

progress, interpretative pauses in civilization, to bring out the meaning of life. Without these austere symbols of the irreconcilable conflict between the world and the Gospel, life would be measurably meaner. But the minor prophets, whose souls are not on fire, may be grateful while pursuing the higher and more audacious loyalties, if the Comic Spirit, testing their exalted moods, puts them on their guard. It is the eternal wonder of the character of Jesus, that He undertook the tragic task of living by the Gospels and yet gave no cause for pity or for laughter.

We have narrowly interpreted the office of the Comic Muse if we think her cynically indifferent to zeal and impassioned prayer; supercilious with the crude, impervious to pathos, tragedy, and grandeur in life. All this she reverently leaves untouched. It is charmed ground, before which she stands with finger on lips and masks the eye. She is ever keen to recognize the heroic vein, and is genially indulgent of superstitions, if rooted in the heart. There is nothing comic in the rude peasant kneeling before a shrine at the cross-roads, or awestruck before a Madonna in Spain. Millet found it sublime. But there is something in-

expressibly funny in the American mother refusing to teach her child the Lord's Prayer before he should "be old enough to choose for himself." There is nothing comic in superstition, when, like a peasant or a cardinal, one is to the manner born; but as an acquired taste among Protestant reactionaries it is likely to be ludicrous. The recent convert from Puritanism must not tell his beads ostentatiously. The luxuriant faith of a Saint Theresa is not comic, but a militant or languid liberalism subsisting on spiritual essences made in Germany and warranted pure, in its complacency gives matter often for laughter. One does not laugh at the ancient Publican beating his breast outside the Temple, but the modern Pharisee, boasting that he is too intelligent to go in, is a bit ridiculous.

Man is least reverent when "mined with conceit, over-blown," affected, or spiritually fantastic. We can well be laughed out of our egotism if we live in a zone where the Comic Spirit thrives. But religion in its spiritual loftiness is fitted to neglect these humbler tasks relating to the mind. It is the proper office of Comedy, as she flashes and plays upon the surface of life, to reveal in her lucent medium false values

which cripple the efficiency of institutions and mar the loveliness of men.

It is an awful affirmation of faith that God sees all. If the conviction be thorough-going it ought to sharpen our comic perception and put us on the alert. That the Soul at the heart of things may laugh need not keep us on our good behaviour,—for *that* we must remember that He loves,—but certainly it may accomplish the meaner task of informing us wherein life ceases to ring quite true. There is a state of grace which is an affair of the comic intelligence. Religion needs this “sunlight of the mind” to keep her enthusiasms fruitful and the heart sweet.

VI

THE SEVEN WORST SERMONS

NOT that there may not be seventy, or even the full scriptural measure of seventy times seven, offenses against homiletical propriety. But the number seven has always possessed for religious circles a certain solemn connotation wanting among the numerals of more secular nature.

As one surveys the field of pulpit oratory for illustrations of sermonic incompetence, he will perceive that if his subject is to be handled with any high order of justice, he must dispossess himself of the personal equation. Among the fifty-two sermons he was privileged to hear last year, there may have been forty-nine which he disliked, which bored him or failed to produce a fluttering of conscience, but these of themselves are not sufficient reasons for bestowing upon any of the forty-nine the sinister distinction we have in mind. They

may have been stupid sermons, badly written, abominably delivered sermons, uninteresting, unedifying, uninspiring, *un-anything* which a sermon may be, and perhaps generally is; but they were just meagre, or commonplace, or tiresome sermons, no more nor less, certainly not of an order of demerit to rank among the seven. For to have won the distinction of badness in a supreme degree, a discourse, like a person, must have violated one of the fundamental laws of goodness, and have clashed somehow with the eternal verities.

But who should say that your dear dominie's sermon last Sunday erred upon so tremendous a scale. It simply, poor thing, was not tremendous in any way. Like so many other well-meaning performances, it just failed, that was all. And in pointing out the mortal sins among the venial offenses of the pulpit, one may hope to bring about a clearance of prejudice relating to the preacher, and to make, in behalf of his difficult art, for more tolerant restraint in the lavish use of superlatives. For last Sunday when, after service, you carelessly made those disparaging remarks about the sermon, you were guilty doubtless of a damaging slander. Dear Christian, unless you have



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studied the matter with an open mind, you do not know how bad a sermon can be.

You may recall the occasion on the Riviera, or in any of the playgrounds of Europe, when you worshipped of a Sunday morning in the little English Chapel. On inquiring after service, of your English neighbour at the pension, who the Rev. Mr. So-and-so was who preached that morning, you learned that he had come down from London on account of his throat. He could not stand the London fog. You may have suspected at the time that there were subsidiary reasons not mentioned by his compatriot for his being here, or rather for his not being there. And yet, in recalling the discourse, if you are possessed of any fine spiritual discernment, you would not elevate the sermon to a place among the seven. You remember it began: "It behooves us, dear friends, on this blessed feast of St. Agatha, to remind ourselves,"—and that was almost the last of it you heard. Now just because so gentle a beginning was the last you heard, the sermon is disqualified for a place among the seven, for the worst sermons are by no means those which leave the listener mentally unencumbered and free to browse in pastures of his choosing.

We must at once admit that dull sermons are not, necessarily, unedifying. The very pause in the liturgy has a symbolic value. I have sometimes wondered why a vesper service, plus even a very lean discourse, seemed to possess spiritual completeness which was wanting in the service with Glorias ornately distended to cover the gap left by the omitted homily. Among the higher uses of church-going, as Mr. Bernard Shaw has caustically hinted, is to be let alone. That is why he found the empty church so edifying. And yet, had he thought more consequently upon the matter, he must have perceived that certain sermons inspire the same spacious sense of detachment as the empty church. Herein lies the sacred merit of the man whose cure of souls, because he had an unsuccessful throat, was the little English Chapel on the Riviera. There was nothing in his discourse peevishly irritating or impudently meddlesome. His voice melted somehow into the melody of the scene like the occasional brass in the orchestra, just obtrusive enough to emphasize the soft cushiony quality of the whole. And while the preacher was neatly tabulating through his strained bronchial organ the sound doctrine and godly

admonition to be derived from the life of the dear Saint whose birthday we happened in upon that morning, we could snuggle down in some shady corner of our souls, or be set adrift upon pleasant excursions of our own, yet all the while dimly conscious that our course was determined by that hidden propeller and provocative of piety, the lean preacher with the throat talking on about St. Agatha.

The merit of this whole class of sermons is subconscious. The preacher does not arrogantly abuse his advantage by keeping the nose of his congregation down to the grindstone of rapt attention, nor by hurling his listeners at once into the stimulating zone of expectancy, but he modestly lays his sermon-stuff from firstly to lastly just below the threshold of consciousness—to be carried over later, if we care to do so, among other valuable experiences in our subconscious treasury of wisdom.

In the First Book of Homilies as set forth by Queen Elizabeth, one runs across the title, "A Sermon, how Dangerous a Thing it is to Fall from God, in Two Parts." Those were the good old days when the higher clergy had the courage to be uninteresting for the glory of God, and when they chose their texts

with no ulterior motive of intellectual display, —a type of self-effacement growing increasingly rare in these stereopticon days when the listener upon every public occasion is expected to sit in the garish light of active attention. Perhaps this explains the deep-seated prejudice among the elect against pulpit oratory of any sort, as savouring a bit of spiritual gaucherie. But there are sermons which do not possess the saving merit of dullness, and will not let us sleep or browse in spiritual pastures of our choosing. They bristle with little irritating goads of “peppery convictions,” innocent enough in themselves, did the preacher not arrogate solely to himself the merit of possessing any convictions at all. He seems in a perpetual state of spiritual irritability and grief over his neighbours’ sins and shortcomings, and we are compelled to attend while our favourite indulgence or folly is paraded before the footlights of public disapproval. Without the prophet’s vocation, he insists upon speaking in the prophet’s shrill key upon most innocent occasions.

It is not his knowing that sin is wrong which annoys us, nor is it that our neighbours, in the next pew, know that sin unabashed stalks in

their midst. But what keeps us in the wakefulness of resistance is the thought of the preacher's not knowing that we do not care who knows that we all innocently commit these faults, and shall go on doing so to our dying day. One may recall such a discourse, perhaps, upon the folly of the love of money. The preacher agreed with St. Paul that it is the root of all human calamity. But what gave the strident note to the preaching was his failure to perceive, poor man, that he was dealing with an honourable controversy of ancient standing, the blot on our human 'scutcheon, the serpent's trail of self-preservation, smearing him alike with the rest of us. If he would send us to our knees, the preacher must enter this ancient feud of mammon and the spirit in the sympathetic mood of the great Apostle: "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." As it was, we stood erect in defiant protest, unabashed, and glorying in our shame. Therein lies the irritating quality of most sermons over-charged with personal conviction. The preacher pitches his voice as it were to carry across some spiritual

chasm. And yet when out of the pulpit he is human enough, relaxing with genial indulgence of our frailties. He will partake of our dinner and drink our tea upon a perfect spiritual equality, apparently blinking the fact of there being any moral hiatus between the pulpit and the pew.

What sends this type of sermon down beneath the strata of the commonplace and bad, into the very pit of the seven worst, is the preacher's lack of sympathetic imagination. We miss in him the mellowing influence of a hardy discipline. Just here is the nice distinction between him and the man with the throat too sensitive for the London fog, who was sent to the Riviera for our blessed vacation uses. The latter had been starved and beaten and snubbed into a certain engaging humility of mind, while his brother of the more oratorical temperament had been battenning upon prosperity. To capitalize man's frailties for oratorical purposes is to take unfair advantage. And yet the seven worst, and most of the seventy bad sermons have been excluded from the good society of mediocrity and good taste by the indulgent appreciation of some section of the pews.

Then there are the sermons which Christopher Vance, had he heard them, would have called "poll-parroting"—sheer feats of verbal pyrotechnics, religion screaming for articulation, words without precision, synonyms knee-deep, explosive gusts of adjectives, vehement adoration of the good, the true, and the beautiful,—a stupendous performance that leaves the preacher limp with self-appreciation,—all the innocent commitment by a talent which our demand for a fluent pulpit has created.

But a more reserved order of egotism than this sermonic violence, and yet one to be reckoned among the homiletical sins, is intellectual self-indulgence in its various forms: a quite modern offense by the way, which came in about the time the Bible was asked to present its credentials, and religion was timorously awaiting the verdict of its accusers. Cleverness, despite the handicap of being tied down to biblical matter, has many ingenious ways of revealing its presence in the pulpit without condescending to be helpful. There is the jaunty treatment of texts,—a way of coquetting with one's subject, withholding sometimes the spiritual intent of the sermon, its plain garden moral, until the end, when the truth

splashes in upon the congregation on a wave of sparkling epigrams. And yet this frolicsome way of preaching has taken a by no means humble rank in the honour roll of contemporary pulpit achievement. There is many a preacher, who, to alter slightly Roger Ascham's pregnant remarks, labours with uncontented care to preach better than he can.

A word about platitudes. Not to shun them is a mark of spiritual insight and humility distinguishing the greater masters, but rare among the clergy just emerging from deacon's orders. We parsons can ill afford to assume any lordly, patronizing airs over these well-accredited messengers of truth. The pulpit may have its own dignity to maintain in the matter, but a platitude humbly administered is a perfectly reputable means of grace for the congregation. What probably has brought platitudes into ill repute is the clergy's lack of self-effacement in employing them,—the air of having been the first to discover their genuine worth. For if the preacher is going to be a bumptious oracle, it were better to be clever and original on his own hook, and not to subject these venerable church dignitaries to his

baser uses. A truth which has sermonic worth probably has become a platitude by the time the twentieth century comes to feel the need of it. And the inestimable benefit of having had a spacious experience is that one is vouchsafed the privilege of discovering for himself the fine gold of cosmic wisdom in these dear old passwords of grace.

We never get on a footing of real acquaintanceship with a moral platitude until we have been duly introduced by some bitter experience. Thereafter a man is inclined to speak respectfully of any member of this old homiletical family. Polonius used his platitudes with the swaggering air of one patting a friend on the back, which leads us to suspect that he was not really on the footing of intimacy. The sad, reverent tone in which Wolsey sermonizes to Cromwell indicates that, after years of training in politics and religion, the astute old Cardinal has at last been admitted into the charmed circle of the venerable platitude concerning ambition. The Ten Commandments are the most threadbare of platitudes, but just break one of the more precious ones if you wish to discover what it is all about. I am

convinced that the clergy make a great mistake if they try to carry on their business without the aid of this sound spiritual capital.

The offense which writes certain sermons down among the seven homiletical sins must be laid at the door of that insidious little imp of egoism which sits like a gargoyle poised on the pulpit for the discomfiture of the preacher's soul. A magic word of exorcism for this imp is recorded in sacred writ. One of the world's preachers whom we are accustomed to reverence is recorded to have said, "We are fools for Christ's sake." St. Paul's preaching may have been criticised among the Greeks for its childish simplicity, but we have it on high authority that it is more meritorious for the preacher to become a fool for his Master's sake than to be in perpetual fear lest he be thought one. Yet many a man has attained considerable reputation as a preacher through his laborious efforts to avoid this estimable sign of discipleship which St. Paul commends to our attention. Most of us must enter maimed if we enter at all into the Kingdom of God, and the pride of intellect is the least disfiguring excision we can make. Egoism, I fear, is the matrix from which emerge most of the deadly

sins of preaching. Was that preacher who must be counted among the world's masters of his art lamenting the intellectual limitations of the pulpit, or its temptations to self-display, when he exclaimed, "Oh, the ignominy of the popular preacher!" Scylla and Charybdis were smooth sailing compared with the uncharted course of us poor preachers whose gracious privilege it is to speak the mind of God to men.

Then there is a certain type of preachment of horrible gnostic lineage, especially deserving of obloquy,—I mean the sermons which seem to esteem it a merit in ancient seers like the Apostles, or even in the Christ, to have enjoyed certain spiritual insight and convictions which are commonplace possessions in our glorious age. They tell us that "St. Paul was wise enough to know," and "Jesus discovered," or "was practical enough to see," and that, "besides being this, He was something else," etc.; nice psychological blanket-descriptions of the whole mind of God.

Reverence,

That angel of the world, doth make distinction
Of place 'twixt high and low—

but it is the last of the graces to flower with

experience in either the layman's or the clergyman's soul. It goes deeper into reality than the superficial spiritual proprieties which may be taught in the seminaries along with Pearson on the Creed.

It is a delicate business, this speaking for God and committing the Son of Man to our hypotheses. For the life of me I cannot, from my shallow experience, imagine just what a Lincoln must have felt in any of the supreme moments of his career, nor explore the heart of any of the great souls "wrestling with the crises of their fate"; and I marvel at the daring which presumes to follow Jesus into the Wilderness, and does not shudder at entering the Garden of Gethsemane.

But doubtless some of us are impatient to get in a word about those mediating sermons which have undertaken the weighty business of reconciling science with religion. Great is the company of them, and certainly they merit a place among the seven. Not a bit of it. They are among quite the most harmless of pulpit efforts. Whose faith was ever permanently impaired by hearing the preacher attempt the beneficent task of making Mr. Darwin and the authors of the First Book of Moses lie down

together like the lion and the lamb? This whole class of sermons are a chivalrous refusal on the part of the faithful to let smart folk and upstart materialists have the last word. It is the business of religion, while guarding the fringe of mystery, to keep an open universe, and to disparage any hasty and premature unifications.

The ancient and heroic way of reconciling science with religion was by burning the scientists. The mediating sermon had not yet been invented. We are beginning to have a sneaking suspicion that Galileo's sufferings have been over-capitalized among Protestant controversialists, and that he may have merited some of the chastisement which he received. I am entirely persuaded that he was altogether right about the earth, but the contemporary Pope was perhaps in a better position to know whether he was altogether right in matters of religion. If Galileo had stuck to science, he might have done what he chose with the planets. It was that dialogue involving the Pope which did the business.

It is an hereditary passion with men of science to take out their vacations in snubbing their ecclesiastical brethren. If only science

and religion would not let their boundaries overlap, and would be content with publishing the mere facts without drawing invidious conclusions, there would never be the least friction. Spencer might have had the handsomest bust in the Abbey for all that good Christians would object, and Galileo might have been saved the embarrassment of recanting. But it is quite likely that the latter, having made the startling discovery that the earth moved, thought he saw it moving straight away from God; and, instead of keeping the horrible suspicion to himself, rushed into print. If his neighbours and dear old maiden aunts chose the old-fashioned view of things, they must have found him very trying to live with. The scientific mind takes a deal of carnal satisfaction in knocking the Christians' conceited earth off its pedestal in the centre of importance, and in reducing it to the ranks of a mere by-product in the cosmic process. Galileo must have rubbed his hands at times in unholy glee at creating a bit of furor among the old fogies. We have not had to live with Galileo, so he has had our militant sympathy, but we have lived in a generation when Huxleys and Spencers have been changing the intellectual cli-

mate. Who of us has not felt his fingers tingling now and then to collect a few fagots for a burning?

What has won me over to the persecutors of Galileo is the fact that they were so tremendously in the right about the really serious truth in the whole controversy,—the spiritual geography of man's precious earth. They did not propose to let the credulous peasants and hard-working folk of the world go down to do business in the great waters of life with the damaging heresy in their hearts that man is not the centre of God's providential care. Nothing sterilizes romance, chivalry, and the arts like such a heresy. Gravitation is a trivial matter in comparison.

It is the solemn responsibility of the Church to see that the *status quo* of the faith regarding man's importance in the cosmic scheme be undisturbed. Here is the crux of the immortal controversy between science and religion. It is like the question of the balance of power in Europe. There is no innate reason in the structure of things why Herzegovina should not have her own flag and a set of national holidays, if she chooses to have them. But the peace of Europe is vastly more essential than

the aspirations of Herzegovina. Now, Galileo and his spiritual descendants have been stubbornly averse to seeing that there is just such a nice adjustment of spiritual values, which churchmen at all hazards must preserve or it is all over with religion. Morals, faith, and church attendance, must be recognized as well as cold scientific facts. Facts would never get science into any trouble with the Church. It is the interpretation of the thing that the fuss is all about. So there you have the breeding-ground for the host of sermons on science and religion, and I see no harm in letting them go on to the end of the chapter—but having, understand me, merely a symbolic value. It is the preacher's way of saying, "We beg to be allowed, in the absence of more convincing testimony, to differ from you and go on with our creed and Ten Commandments."

But in touching the matter of science and religion we are perilously near one of the seven deadly sermonic sins. There is the sermon which we heard last Easter perhaps, and which we thought tremendously clever. The preacher—of the sort who keeps thoroughly abreast of the times—had just been reading that romantic narrative of Mr. Duncan's, *The New Knowl-*

edge, and he sat down to write his sermon with his brain seething with the revelation that the molecule which, under the old order, had seemed reliable enough, was in reality composed of a million million or so other things whirling through antres vast of atomic worlds, and doing spectacular feats. What a marvel! And God did it! That is what struck the fire of enthusiasm and stimulated the imagination of the preacher—that God could do all that! A veritable scientific exoneration of the prosaic deity, who had seemed hitherto exclusively devoted to ecclesiastical matters. Ergo, what an holiday performance for One capable of such atomic wonders, to build somewhere on the place a heaven in answer to our desires!

Now the deadly offense in this seemingly innocent type of sermon is the homiletical perverseness displayed in the choice of material. We were all pretty well persuaded, long since, of God's inventiveness and ability. I am not sure that atomic revelations and radium have added to His reputation for resourcefulness. We had already seen the landscape, and had heard the song of birds in our hedges in spring, and children's laughter, and felt the tragedy of life along with God's love nearer than hands

and feet. We are ever hungry to know more of this matter if the preacher only will stick to the marvellous tale. Here are undisputed property-rights of the preacher, and it were a crime against his art not to have found sermon-stuff in the delicate texture of his daily experience.

I am more and more persuaded that the preacher had better stick to his last. The signal fault with intellectualism in the pulpit, and indeed with intellectualism in religion at all, is that it is an offense against one of nature's primal laws—a clog in the machinery of spiritual evolution. For variety has always been the indispensable element in the economy of revelation. It is only through the versatility of human experience and of intuitions—windows of every size thrown open to the four corners of the heavens—that God contrives to let his revelation come full circle.

The only reason for the preacher's encumbering the earth at all is that there is somewhat to tell which God desires told concerning religion; and if we shall prostitute our lofty office to the performance of pale intellectual feats and other trivial indulgences, revelation becomes by so much the leaner. It were as sad a

discomfiture of the evolutionary processes for the preacher to turn man of the world, or pedant, as for the artist to become moralist or prophet. The lavish symbols of sacrifice bequeathed us by the saints have amply justified the narrowing vocation of holiness.

One of the deadly sins in this business of the preacher is to have missed the implement and the raw material for the practice of his art. Quite as vast as the habitat which science holds is the yet uncharted land of our rich human nature. Here, by divine appointment, is the preacher's workshop. Like his brother artists, he must be responsive to a thousand kinds of human contact, for every seemingly moral situation issues into many "radiating corridors" of life. His completed book of sermons becomes a veritable *Comédie Humaine*, with a diviner right than Balzac's of knowing and of loving the creatures with whom it is given him to deal.

So the stunning height of the endeavor ordains that there shall be few great preachers in the centuries, fewer masters than any other art can show. We recall that Stevenson, in writing on the profession of letters, says, "If you propose to enter on the field of contro-

versy, you should first have thought upon the question under all conditions, in health as well as in sickness, in sorrow as well as in joy." Certainly that is true of preaching. Few men under thirty-five are permitted to understand what Jesus meant by the first and second Beatitudes. God may touch the strings in the soul of Keats at twenty-five, and let him sing as he beholds

Upon the night's starr'd face
Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance;

but the preacher must forge his implement from a more laggard experience.

The pulpit voices which have soared have earned the privilege by a personal knowledge of the skeleton in the closet of civilization—a discernment not always born of "the laying on of hands." I should prefer to hear Lady Macbeth, after the fourth act, on the Sixth Commandment, and Mrs. Alving on the Ninth, than, well, your esteemed rector perhaps. Poor Tess could have preached a series of Lenten sermons upon texts of her choosing, which might have blown some cosy moral systems to atoms, and have cleared the ground for

New Testament convictions to sprout. One wishes that Jean Valjean had taken to preaching. He is the only man I know whose opinion I care to hear upon certain parts of the New Testament. But deep spiritual insight may come too late to permit the taking of orders. What lavish waste, in the suicide of Judas, of what might have been saving experience! That crisis of despair, under proper treatment, were fertile soil for many a saying of his Master lost upon serener discipleship.

One has heard men preach on the goodness of God as though life were a frolicsome feast with an over-indulgent God as host. But sometimes we have heard of the matter from those who have groped "thro' darkness up to God"—and that was preaching.

Not that there is not an important function for the spiritual imagination in homiletics as in other arts. Experience is not the sole medium by which one may come to perceive spiritual values. "Mere goodness" is not the preacher's greatest asset. So it were well to give restrained appreciation to our pulpit orators, and not to expect from them more than a tepid Christianity after the curtain falls upon the benediction.

The analogy to the actor's art is closer than the pulpit cares to own, and the artistic temperament draws richly upon stores of vicarious virtue. But to be a likely medium for the revelation of spiritual truth one must have had other than a soft, bourgeois, level existence. The tragic in life is not likely to be perceived in a spiritually reclining posture. And if the hazards of fortune bring the preacher a smooth and prosperous sailing, he should wear his prosperity with humble restraint, as one having suffered an irremediable loss. He carries a handicap, as the poet or the tragedian who has never been in love. It perhaps matters little whether an alarm has awakened us from a lethargy of goodness or of badness, so long as we stand staring wide-eyed into the abyss of life.

The austerities of John Baptist as an aid to the understanding heart were a good asset in his preaching, and are by no means to-day the fond anachronism that our "healthy-minded" twentieth-century congregations suppose. Such asceticism comes to the business of Gospel exegesis with a fund of telling illustrations upon the essential fibre of the religion of Jesus. The supplementing note which civilization

craves is one born of prayer and fasting—which explains the inevitableness of the tonsure and rope, or of some modern Protestant ascetic equivalent. The sleek Prince Albert and white tie are a pale substitute for these austere symbols, and they require much fortifying in the way of eloquence to attain the rich suggestiveness of the monastic vows.

After all, Savonarola grasping the crucifix and hurling his message of other-worldliness with eyes radiantly fixed upon a transcendent order, satisfies the spiritual imagination as to how the Gospel should be preached.

The classic age of preaching is yet to come, when some great artist-preacher, as none has ever yet been, shall discover in his implement a "new dimension of art." There are signs that our century may see his appearing, as psychology slowly outlines in dim pencilling what the future holds for us. Humanity had never placed such high stakes upon civilization as in the dreams of our age of science; but she is again discovering within her dark corridors the same old pathetic family skeletons of the race. So far, in answer to those high hopes, we have only a gnawing hunger. Alas! Civilization does not save. Here is matter for the pith of

giant souls, of which we shall soon hear more in literature as well as in the pulpit. Thus far those who have caught the subtler overtones of experience have for the most part chosen the humbler rôle of silence or the medium of other arts, leaving the pulpit to our more boisterous spirits.

The cardinal offense of bad preaching is an affair, not of the head, but of the heart. The purpose of the sermon, like the Puritan poet's great endeavour, is to justify the ways of God to man and to reconcile us to fate. But too often the medium which the preacher offers is opaque, and God does not get a chance to save the congregation. We preachers, alone, have our innings. And yet nature has a way of healing through the liturgy the wounds we make. For when all is said, even in the "leading pulpits" there are few discourses after which the benediction fails to effect the "restored presence of God" among the congregation.

VII

SOME FALSE CONSOLATIONS OF WAR

A DARING philosopher will some day reopen the question whether people really grow good through suffering. I do not mean, does one become more unselfish, another less worldly, and others more humble through loss of husband or child or eyesight; but may not such gains to character, even if enduring, be accounted negligible when we consider the cost? So Emerson thought. In his quest for reality, he places grief among the illusions of experience.

He who would attack this problem should be daring, for the mood which must be dissected is one dear to religion, and its tender memories are sacred to us all. In that twilight world of sensitive values through which the mourner moves, he catches some exquisite overtones of experience, difficult to evaluate. One would rather not disturb such consolations. The

preacher harvests abundant homiletical material in this hinterland of life, and our popular hymns attest what people think about grief, disappointment, and failure as a road to the kingdom of heaven.

If men grow good through suffering, the beatitude of mourning must have found in Europe since the beginning of the War a staggering brilliance of illustration; for the energy of the race is now enlisted in the making of sorrow. University professors and preachers are seeing in this anguish a fulcrum for our redemption. Militarists of the most zealous school could scarcely go further in the praise of war as a spiritual tonic than some of these apologists from the seclusion of learning have done of late.

Europe had scarcely uttered its first sob of agony from the War before moral deductions were in print. The millions of tearless mourners, ecstatic in their patriotism, praising the worth of life and the glory of dying, became a great world-sermon. It was the second beatitude flashed across the sky. Preachers took up the cry, and since August a year ago the agony of Europe has been coined into countless sermons. The spiritual by-products of

war—its superb courage, its sacrifice, its detachment from all sordid concern—are offered as compensation for this harvest of pain. Thus the martyred spirit of the race has wistfully covered with a veil of beauty the shambles in Poland, Belgium, and France.

From Germany, Russia, France, and, with restraint, from England, has come fervid testimony of a race exalted while it mourns. An Oxford scholar writes, "The nations at war are discovering their souls." From the University of Moscow comes the word that "this is a time when the ideal meaning of national and human life is being revealed with a splendour and an energy seldom witnessed." The sanctums of Germany are giving unmeasured praise of this rare hour in history; and humbler folk everywhere are showing spiritual exaltation in a sacrifice without tears and a faith that is crowding the churches. If we accept this witness, we must believe that since the engines of war set about their gruesome task the soul of Europe has been cleansed.

It seems sacrilegious to examine critically these shreds of comfort in which Europe is wrapping her misery. But we who stand aside from the conflict, if we are to defend our paci-

fist ideals, must be willing to scan closely these spiritual credentials of war. For if these higher loyalties, so precious to national life, which are forged by the hardships of war, are fitted permanently to enrich the future, then it may be that lovers of peace are too niggard in counting the cost of ideals. If the nations at war are really "finding their souls," this pearl of great price may be worth what it costs. Pacifists, therefore, may well ask whether this sublime mood of those who are giving their all is a true witness of Europe's redemption, or is a kind of hysteria which is so often the illusion of grief.

This blessedness of a world in agony—what does it mean? How shall we estimate its moral worth? Do we want it? Is it worth what it costs? And do we yet know how much it will cost? Will this mood make lasting contributions to character, or is there in store for Europe a disillusion such as the mourner knows when, after the first transport of courage is past, he listlessly faces the void?

How familiar to us is that buoyant courage which meets our proffered consolation almost like a rebuff, in the first hours of bereavement in the house of sorrow. We come to bring sup-

port. We find the mourner in exalted mood, supplying from the very depths of grief his own cool wells of comfort. We are not disconcerted by this ecstasy of sorrow. We feel the greater pity; for what others praise for courage or blame for insensibility we know to be more pitiable than sobs. This tearless thing is not yet courage. Fortitude has not begun to exact her heavy toll. It is the illusion of grief that it appears to give us strength which we do not possess.

Our tenser emotions are generally accounted untrustworthy. Accurately to appraise our spiritual values we must fall back upon the sustained levels of experience. None of us is really so bad as his worst self or quite so good as his best. Any clergyman, watching sympathetically the growth of character, learns this. He fosters, but not always hopefully, loyalties evoked under stress. They make us feel better men than we really are.

Now, grief shares with some other tense emotions this illusion. It seems to reveal our purest and most generous selves. From the grave of our hopes and loves spring often that same calm and detachment which we are familiar with in religious conversion. For peace of

mind is not so much a question, perhaps, of what men believe, as it is of the things for which they have ceased to care. When one loses all either by chance, as in sorrow, or by choice, as in conversion when the penitent "throws his all at the feet of Christ," there is a sweet abatement of striving. Thus the avalanche of grief as it breaks over the soul carries with it many a nagging worry. It simplifies life by the elimination of fretful interests. India with her siren call of self-abnegation has taught the world what peace may be found in "not caring."

Now this, I suspect, is the mood of Europe at this hour. It is tasting the freedom which the irresponsibility of a great sacrifice always brings to conventional morals. Civilization in days of peace compels us to be calculating and provident. Its margin for lavish enthusiasms is narrow. War, on the other hand, hurls us at once into a land of romance where we cast to the four winds all our worldly caution and timid measurements. The luxury of throwing all away and "not caring" is rare to mortals accustomed to the plodding steps of peace. It is the long-dreamed-of pilgrimage of the soul. The first days of self-renunciation offer, de-

spite the agony, certain peculiar compensations. They are costly but none the less soothing. So, it may truly be said that Europe is to-day unworldly and simple at heart. War has for the moment resorted to unity the nation's divided self. In so far it has seemed to experience redemption.

But when I say that this is the mood of Europe at this hour, I do not, of course, include in my reckoning the men and boys who are now in the trenches, or the million dead. I feel restrained from satisfaction over spiritual blessings earned by the anguish of war, when I read a passage like the following from a recently published letter from Munich: "A French official told me that the horror on the trains for removing the wounded was so great—the suffering, the screams, the contortions of the mangled and dying—that they were absolutely compelled to change the train guards every few days, as nerves could not continue to stand the scenes and they went insane if not removed." And again: "A German officer home on a week's furlough, telling me something of the trench warfare at Arras (justly called the hell of Arras) said that for a very long time back no wounded could be

picked up between the hostile trenches. They had to be left to die, some in hours, some in days. The result is that the wounded writhe and scream until they die, lying on the fields between the trenches amid heaped-up carcasses of whites, Negroes, Hindoos, and animals, bloated to many times their normal size and amid a stench which is an indescribable horror."

If such be the price of a nation's "finding its soul," is it not a pitiable confession that our cowardice and shame should require such bitter atonement? In the presence of Europe's agony, the writhing of Armenia, the gathering fury in the Balkans, is it quite the time to talk about our spiritual gains?

And may we not be making too generous concessions to the militarist's cause when we accept as real this quick redemption of Europe? Despite these glowing by-products of war, I see in it all only a tragedy pathetic beyond words or tears. The romance of its lavish sacrifice does not restrain my loathing and my shame. There is for me little consolation in Russia's abstinence from vodka when I see her peaceful peasants drunk with blood. I cannot rejoice over the decrease of crime in her villages when I read of the devastation wrought in Bel-

gium and Poland. I refuse to find one scrap of comfort in Europe's return to God as the nations sob their litanies in the crowded churches. This mighty wave of patriotism has cleansed the fountains of life, it is true. It has purified like fire. Despite the strife of tongues, the house has been cleansed of many an unlovely and sordid desire. But does any one suppose that this will last? That Russia is permanently temperate? That Germany and France will be henceforth devout? England unworldly? Have these high moments in the heat of war distilled for us essences so rare and beautiful?

If we turn to the past for our measurement of these emotions evoked by conflict, we shall find scant comfort for the militarist. The Thirty Years' War left Europe spiritually and materially bankrupt. It checked for generations the progress of civilization. It is impossible to say what spiritual riches were sunk in that grave. We should be indulging bold inference were we to affirm that the Seven Years' War and the Napoleonic wars were processes of redemption. Certainly our own Civil War was fought for a lofty principle. Here, if anywhere, war should have been the

means through which the soul of a nation might find itself. But were the decades between Appomattox and the beginning of our century years for us of romance, high patriotism, and religious faith? For an evaluation of that lean period of our national life, we have only to recall what men like Godkin, Norton, and Lowell thought about it. Why did not the sober discipline of war beget in America a fine-souled progeny? The afterglow of our war was not a season of disinterested patriotism. Virtues conceived in war have frequently proved sterile. Only fifty years have passed since sacrifice and suffering brought to America a means of national redemption. But were we at the outbreak of the present war less materialistic than Europe? If war discovers to a nation its soul, surely there is much to be said in behalf of such rigorous discipline. But there have been many wars in Europe during the past one hundred years. Must nations find their souls so often? Is it sordid to ask whether a redemption so fleeting is worth what it costs?

We appeared to be upon the verge of a great religious revival when the War broke out. The first decade of the new century was rich in

promise of a new idealism. What will become of this hope no one can now say. Already the deep religious sense of humility and awe, which during the first months of the War brought encouragement to the churches, is waning. Church attendance in Germany is again declining, and the high emotional tension in which we live is numbing our sympathies: we are growing less responsive to tales of suffering. How different from our grief over the *Titanic* was the concern with which America received the news of the *Lusitania* and the *Eastland*! This is not the spiritual climate in which to carry forward social reform with its careful husbanding of human life and its sensitiveness to waste.

Some pretty severe things have been said of late regarding the materialism of that business man's Europe, with its snug comforts and lean emotions, from which the War delivered us. But, after all, was it so poor a thing when we compare it with what is going on in Europe to-day?

I dare to think that Germany, France, and even Belgium were more fruitful types of Christianity before the War, when their people were immersed "in the discordant and piece-

meal torrent of daily life," than they are to-day in their fervid ecstasy of sacrifice. Europe must some day return to the monotonous chores of peace, the tax worries, and the unsung sacrifice. Is there any evidence that we shall do the thing more beautifully for having passed a few years in an orgy of destruction?

There is a vast sustaining fellowship in sorrow now while drums are beating and the armies march by, but we must not forget that Europe has thus far only promised the sacrifice. She has not yet completed payment. The reckoning is coming when men and women with their souls bled white must set about the task of rebuilding the waste, while the finest spirits are lying in their graves.

But even were we certain that nations at war discover their souls, we might be permitted to doubt whether the end would justify the means. Surely there is a more decent, humane way for humanity to grow good than by the immolation of five million boys. The leaven of the Gospels was fitted to expand in other soil than blood and tears.

I have seen men grow holy as they stood by the casket of a child. But dare we suggest such sacrifice that parents may save their souls?

Beatitudes may be too dearly bought. I have sometimes wondered whether we mortals were not too officiously eager in springing to God's defense whenever an earthquake, the horrors of war, or the premature death of our loved ones makes life a bitter thing. There are some experiences so terrible that even the extenuating fact of spiritual discipline seems to insult our courage, and to rob our grief of its patient dignity. Brave men smitten in their love may grow finer; but one would never be so base as to weigh together in the balance the spiritual gain and the human sacrifice it cost. I must believe that life affords to the soul, as it does to the body, cheerful ways of growing strong. While the modest loyalties of our daily life require such moral vigour, the Iron Cross of courage can be sufficiently earned on the battle-fields of peace.

So, one modest service which we can render the cause of peace is the attempt to have a right judgment of some of the spiritual by-products of war. It were best not to appear too grateful for minor blessings gained from accumulations of misery. For, unawares, we may seem to lend approval to Treitschke's teaching that "the disappearance of war would turn the earth

into a great temple of selfishness." Christianity cannot afford to concede so much. Germany's school of blood and iron has said few finer words about war than some of our preachers and professors have unwittingly done in their quick gratitude for recent signs of "spiritual unity" in Germany, France, and Russia. An indiscriminating patriotism, feeding upon the emotions, is a big asset to any general staff. It stiffens the moral fibre for the battlefield and it inhibits critical judgment at home. But we who view the matter at a distance are responsible to more permanent interests than the mere equipping of a nation's energies for battle.

I have no theory for the prevention of wars. War is certainly not always a sin. There have been many chivalrous and necessary wars. I have scant sympathy with pacifists who blind their eyes to facts. But we should do well to leave war in the unpretentious category where General Sherman placed it. While we are weaving a halo for the thing we call "sacrifice," there is danger of forgetting the bestiality of the actual business of slaughter. Those who have set about the beneficent task of preventing a plague do not sentimentally divert their ener-

gies into by-paths of appreciation of the nobler aspects of plagues. They may be mindful of the devotion of physicians and the fortitude of those who suffer, but they continue to call the loathsome thing "the plague." We overdo our gracious desire to be hopeful when we place these scourges among the saving forces needful to keep life unselfish and clean. Human nature is not so grossly mean as to require these constant purgings of fire. So it all comes back to the question of the salutariness of tears.

VIII

WAR AND THE CHURCHES

OBVIOUSLY there can not be real fellowship among nations while people of different tongues prepare to murder one another and war continues to be on the agenda of governments and churches. I therefore address myself to the topic of war and the Churches.

I have not sufficient grace to be a pacifist, nevertheless I do not believe we shall ever end the stupid, beastly business of war until the Christian Church declares war to be a sin, and follows up that declaration with appropriate action. When *The Churchman* last November made that declaration, we were accused of not thinking the thing through. *The New Republic* commended our kind heart, but spoke patronizingly of our mind. *The Continent* condemned our morals. The Church Militant, it declared in substance, must fight Jehovah's enemies. It ought to be a disquieting consid-

eration to the defenders of a militant Church that ministers are always disposed to identify the enemies of Jehovah with the enemies of their own particular country, an attitude which would make opposing governments infallible interpreters of God's will.

We need not repudiate the last war. The Church need not have declared war to be a sin in the year 1914 any more than it should have declared slavery to be a sin in the year one. It would be as idle a moral pastime to repudiate the past wars as it would be to repudiate our polygamous forefathers. Moral systems, we all know, are not handed down from Heaven in complete parcels. They grow. I am not contending that war was a sin five, ten, or a hundred years ago. I am contending that *henceforth* war is a sin. It has now been fully revealed to us what war is made of, what are its unclean causes, its substance, and its results. I maintain that if God has made anything clear to the mind of Christendom, He has revealed to us the sinfulness of war. If the Christian Church blesses another war, its blessing and its curse will have no further authority and prestige for our civilization. There are tremendous risks and some baffling perplexities in

such an attitude, but the perplexities are not greater, nor the risks more perilous, than those incurred if the Church should undertake to champion another world-wide civil war. For my purpose I accept Thomas Aquinas's definition of sin: "An act not in accord with reason informed by the divine law."

If the Church is to take such a stand it must begin at once a great crusade of preparedness; for to declare conduct sinful without urging preventive measures would be slothful. The anti-social forces in society which accept war as inevitable, and desirable, are not slothful. They make ready the ground to produce the event. They spend brain as well as money in preparedness. They wilfully produce provocatives. They maintain the type of civilization which requires war as an implement and an asset. Suppose the Church were to declare war to be a sin. What should be its educational programme? Such an inquiry comes, I think, within the range of our topic.

I

First, I think that the Church should at once begin to codify the spiritual experience of the

World War of 1914. What is now required of us who believe war to be an unmitigated curse, is to give the Church a memory. Bishop Gore was visiting in this country when the Armistice was declared. Amid the light-hearted rejoicing of the hour, Dr. Gore's attitude was disappointing to many of our bellicose clergy, who, generally speaking, are disposed to think well of Anglican bishops. American churchmen, especially our outstanding spokesmen, were still in a state of spiritual ecstasy over the War. One of them wanted to march into the Brandenburg Gate. Most of our New York Rectors were still dreaming dreams and seeing visions of what the War would do for the soul of the race. Bishop Gore was disappointing to these militant priests. He quoted history. They had forgotten history. He was both a Christian and a scholar. He remembered that war had always been a spiritual depressant.

During the three years which have followed the Armistice, the ecstasy of the clergy over the religious texture of war has abated. It began to abate in England and Europe after the first three months. But will the Church remember what it has learned? We have tabulated the

wages of many kinds of sin—lust, intemperance, greed. What the last war taught us about the sinful fruits of war, let us hold fast in memory! Let us teach it, shout it from the housetops, put it into pamphlets and books, into sermons and catechisms, into commandments and programmes, and into a mighty, world-wide crusade, with a train of martyrs sealing the truth, if need be, with their blood! Then, if the world should determine to go to war again in our generation, the Church will have the documents to give the lie to those propagandists, laymen, women, and priests, who will again talk of war as Calvary and its sacrifices as spiritual discipline.

May I be pardoned for quoting from an article which I wrote for *The Atlantic Monthly* in the autumn of 1915, entitled “Some False Consolations of War”?

I refuse to find one scrap of comfort in Europe’s return to God as the nations sob their litanies in the crowded churches. This mighty wave of patriotism has cleansed the fountains of life, it is true. It has purified like fire. Despite the strife of tongues, the house has been cleansed of many an unlovely and sordid desire, but does any one suppose that this will last? That Russia is permanently temperate? That

Germany and France will be henceforth devout? England unworldly? Have these high moments in the heat of war distilled for us essences so rare and beautiful?

The event has proved these words to be true. But shall we remember our war experiences the next time our armies begin to march? Shall the Church continue to teach historical untruths, and utter the same tragic words of hate which we uttered in 1914? If the war makers should hold the faintest suspicion that the pulpits of Christendom would do their own Christian thinking about war, and exercise the liberty of choice whether they should bless or condemn it, our governments would be more deliberate about setting the stage for another war.

First, then, as a preventive of war, we should insist that the Church shall cultivate a memory, and out of that memory teach, early and late, in season and out of season, the wages of the sin of war. In all the anti-war propaganda, material waste and physical suffering have received the major emphasis. These considerations will never end war. The conviction that war is sin alone will bring the issue squarely

before the conscience of the race, and give wings to its latent idealism. Thus far, neither the brain nor the conscience of the Church has been enlisted in its crusade against war. We have acquiesced in the political doctrine of war as the lesser of two evils; we have staked nothing on a great crusade of preparedness for peace.

II

If the Churches declare war to be a sin, we must seek to discover what are the irritants in our present social order which tend to produce war. What is fundamentally wrong with the civilization which, every few decades, brings the plain peoples of the world into the shambles, stains their souls with unreasoning hate, and makes beasts out of heroic, chivalrous men? Something is radically wrong. What is it? The Christian Church need not bless this civilization any more than it need bless the Soviet Republic. The Church produced the civilization of the Middle Ages, such as it was. The Church had very little to do either with making or bettering our present civilization in its basic qualities. The Church accepted it as

the industrial revolution moulded it, and we became its handmaid. Protestantism in England a hundred years ago became the tool of the great industrial forces. Protestantism acquiesced in its cruelties, its frightful economic inequalities, its soul-blighting conditions of labour. Can we read without a blush of shame the names of the Bishops and Archbishops who sat in the House of Lords and voted "No" on the bills introduced to alleviate the horrible lot of the little chimney climbers and of the children who worked in the mines and scarcely ever saw daylight? Yes, and the names of pious Evangelicals and Methodists of a hundred years ago, who, while they wept over the lot of West Indian slaves, refused to lift up their voices in behalf of the slaves of England's factories! The amelioration of the conditions of the working classes, the abolition of some of the frightful conditions of child labour, were carried through with little assistance from the clergy. That battle, it must be said to our shame, was won by illiterate labour leaders. Denied the sympathy of the Church, the learning of the schools, and the equal justice of the courts, they finally won; but they won without the support of the men who claimed to receive

through a golden stream of apostolic grace the love and light of Christ.

Not one churchman in ten thousand, I venture to say, has the slightest idea of the social implications of his creed; not one in ten thousand perceives the dramatic social significance of our two great festivals, Christmas and Easter Day. Of the thousands of worshippers in our churches on Good Friday, who watch at the Cross for three hours in great pity for the sufferings of Christ, how many ever give a thought to that long line of Christ's little brothers, bearing witness to fellowship, who through the centuries have hung upon crosses, crucified by the defenders of the *status quo*? When the Church shall be willing to take some of the magic out of the doctrine of the Incarnation, and put morality in it, we shall make religion a more effective implement of fellowship.

Therefore I maintain that some of us within the Churches who are not satisfied with a civilization which brings its beneficiaries, every generation or two, into the shambles, must continue, as some of this group are doing, to weigh in the scales of Christian ethics our present social order. We must make fellowship pre-

vail at home in our industrial order, before we can hope to make fellowship prevail among the nations.

III

If governments would declare war against the real enemies of the men whom they conscript, the Church could enter such a war with all the zeal of a covenanter, convinced that the battle is the Lord's. The difficulty is that the real enemies do not get ranged opposite each other in the trenches. We are taught to hate the innocent. The Church aids and abets this bestial business in which every government engages in the time of war, of blasting people's souls with the indecencies of hate. They lie to us and we pass on the lies in our sermons. They deceive us and we build commandments on their deceits. Nobody ever deserves to be hated as nations hate one another in war. To produce such venom, the hate makers lie about their fellow men. They lie outrageously. They lie out of whole cloth. They suppress the truth which would mitigate hate. They deliberately spread a spiritual plague. They breathe out the hate germs from their press bureaus. Chiefs of propaganda bureaus re-

lease the germs every morning. They befoul the minds of simple, honest, good-natured people with their lies. Finally they succeed in producing a *fighting edge*. Most farmers, artisans, clerks, fathers of families, and mothers, prefer peace to war. They would rather raise crops, make and sell merchandise, than to lie in the trenches waiting to kill somebody or to be killed. Without the help of the devil we couldn't make warriors of men to-day. The Church blesses this beastly business! And journalists call it the lesser of two evils! The next war may be the lesser of two evils; but if the Church blesses that war it will be committing a sin, for God has given us the intelligence and the conscience to prevent it.

If war really meant killing the enemy, the Church might view it as they do capital punishment—grim, but necessary. But the enemy doesn't get into the trenches. We are told that Stinnes of Germany was the instigator and the brain of the rape of Belgium. It was he who for commercial reasons counselled the stripping of Belgium's industries and the crippling of the French mines. It was he who counselled the deportation of expert Belgian workmen to German factories. But how can Belgian and

French patriots ever avenge themselves upon Stinnes by going to war against Germany? He is probably richer to-day than he ever was. It isn't Stinnes that they bomb, and gas, and bayonet when they go to war. It is innocent victims like themselves, their own blood-brothers in Christ.

War is growing to be ever a more diabolical and indecent and unreasonable thing. When we say war is sin, we mean modern war in its depraved totality, its lying and its lust, its atrocity provoked by lies, its counter-atrocities, provoked by atrocities, its food blockades—the worst atrocity of all—its vengeance wreaked upon unborn babes. I have heard Christian women say that every German baby ought to be killed. That is the state of mind which governments, when they declare war, foist upon the Church. Is it, or is it not, a sin? How long will the descendants of the Apostles permit politicians and diplomats to tell them when and how they should abrogate the Gospel, teach a new commandment of hate, and bless rapine and murder? Isn't it about time we used the intelligence God gave us to discern what war is? The people who are shocked when we say that war is sin, are thinking of

war in abstract terms. They define it to be justice battling against wrong, chivalry against the bully. It is no longer that. The bullies don't get into the trenches. The real sinners never breathe the poison gas.

IV

We can make war on war psychology by shifting the emphasis of adulation from war heroes to men and women who have wrought some good work on behalf of Christian fellowship. Obviously the great teachers, doctors, scientists, deserve honourable mention. What folly that school children should know all about Napoleon, and so little about Pasteur! All about Sherman and nothing about the men who gave their lives to conquer the yellow fever germ in Cuba! Our calendar of saints is too exclusive. I should like to see the lives written, for use in Sunday-schools, of the great labour leaders, whose names few of us even know, who in those terrible years of industrial revolution in England, from 1760 to 1832, led their people out of that terrible slavery of factories and mines, hounded by governments, persecuted by the courts. Men like Cobbett, Hardig, Thel-

well, Watson, Gerreld, Place, Knight, Prentice, and hundreds of others whose names are preserved in the criminal records of their country. They did quite as much, perhaps, for the poor of England as the Wilberforces, Hannah More, Whitfield, and Wesley, for while the Evangelicals had their eyes fixed on Heaven and the sound churchmen of the Establishment had one eye fixed on the good things of this world, untutored leaders bore in prison and on the scaffold the cross of labour's emancipation.

V

We can also make war on experts. It is humiliating to read in the daily papers what young Theodore Roosevelt, the Assistant Secretary of the Navy, thinks is necessary to insure our national safety, while bishops and other ministers who ought to know something about the spiritual forces which make for security, lend a reverent and attentive ear. Army and navy experts and statesmen have been giving the plain peoples of the world protection for a good many centuries. But wars and famine and unemployment go merrily on. Why shouldn't the Church exhibit some of its ex-

pert knowledge? I don't think we could kill many more people by our mistakes than our highly honoured experts have been doing heretofore. Groups such as the one meeting here under this roof ought to speak with authority, and to speak loud. We should have our programme for international defense and national good-will. There is a very large multitude of people who want something like a Kingdom of Heaven established on earth and are willing to use their brains to promote it.

VI

“This is all very well, but what do you propose to do? You say you are not a pacifist, yet you urge the Church to boycott war and declare it to be a sin. What if Japan should attack California to-morrow? What if some bully of a junker should slap your grandmother on the face? What if England should attempt to crush France? Or Russia and Germany should pool issues and overrun Europe? What if the Crescent should again come to grips with the Cross? War can be the lesser of two evils. Would you bolt patriotism and morality and go it alone on a fine formula?”

I am not greatly concerned about these "what ifs." I can suggest them as fast as my opponents.

What if the Church should discover where its true mission lies—among the great mass of the world's plain people, of every nationality and clime—and its voice should be lifted among the people to win their trust and give them Christian leadership. Wouldn't that voice be heard by governments and statesmen as the voice of the English Labour Party was heard by Lloyd George, when a war with Russia was under advisement?

What if, when the men who have business interests in Mexico begin to fill the press with their pre-war atrocity stories, and their representatives in Congress begin to talk intervention—what if the Church spoke up and said, "You can't make war upon Mexico. We shall preach peace while you are preaching war. We shall denounce conscription. We shall go to jail if need be, not as pacifists or conscientious objectors, but as Christian citizens, who refuse any longer to be made fools of in the name of false patriotism!"

What if the Church took so seriously to heart the gravity of the sin of war that we

started to carry on the biggest crusade that the Church has ever attempted in the long years of her history, spent our missionary dollars upon it, spent our brain upon it! What would war makers think of the expediency of making war with this kind of inflammable material at home?

What if the Churches here in America should flood Asia and Europe and the islands of the sea with propaganda against war, drop it from aeroplanes, instead of dropping bombs, send it through secret channels, teach it in mission stations? What if we meant business? What if we refused to spend our talent, our prayers, our parishioners' money, in teaching the Gospel of good-will, only to send up in a flame of war hate all the costly product of our patient labours?

Has the Church ever done any thinking for preparedness for peace? No, we have gone on believing what statesmen have told us, that war is the lesser of two evils and the battle is always the Lord's. We have docilely hated those we have been told to hate, and we have pretty nearly preached in time of war what we have been told to preach. We have lied with the liars, and we have committed spiritual atroci-

ties to order, and all the while we believed that humanity and God loved to have it so. Isn't it time we did better? The last war may have been the lesser of two evils; the next war will be suicide. If we believe this, let us begin at once to educate statesmen, newspapers, and the clergy. The next war must be boycotted by the Church of Christ.

A big risk indeed! But war is a big risk. It is a risk to slaughter the flower of the race, to fill the world with enervating hate and benumb its intelligence by hysteria, to lay waste empires and to spread famine over the planet. People talk as if pacifism were the only risk, and as if the religion which repudiated war threatened the foundations of government. Are some of those foundations too precious to be disturbed?

So against the "what ifs" of a Church in revolt, I present another "what if." What if the Church should decide to trust its Lord and God, and, with a little of the martyr's zeal, dedicate to humanity its conscience and its brain? We have the vision, but we let cynics stamp upon it, and we tremble and grow faint at their scoffings and their doubts. I am sure that God never founded a Church and sealed

it with the Blood of His Son merely to do what this Church of Christ has done, with its brain and its conscience, during the last hundred years.

Can any one doubt that God wills we should cleanse this world of war? Then why not trust God to help us find the implement wherewith to rid the planet of the loathsome thing? We shall never abolish war by gradual improvement and the slow processes of redemption of human nature. Duelling was not abolished by converting duellists. Men still insult and impugn one another's honor, but they don't fight duels. Duelling was abolished by a fiat of the Christian conscience. If we wait to abolish war till all men love one another, we shall wait until Judgment Day. Some generation has got to stop the thing short. Why not ours?

IX

WHY GOD PITIES MEN

Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him.—PSALM ciii., 13.

WHY should God pity men? We may read that verse in our Psalms, close the book, leave the thought of the Psalmist, and consulting, each of us, his own experience, think of a hundred reasons why God should pity men. The dark problems in which we grope our way, the piercing grief of life, the mornings of buoyant hope followed by despair at evening, the suffering of the innocent, the weakness and loneliness of old age, the helplessness of all of us, strong and weak, the cruel punishments which, in the Providence of God, follow upon venial offence against wisdom and life,—whole lives tumbled into agony by one false step,—surely there are abundant reasons why a merciful God should pity the men whom He has made.

But there is a difficulty here. The moment we begin to examine God's pity, we are prone to interpret it by the most profitless exercise in which moral beings can engage,—self-pity. When we begin to pity ourselves, we lose our self-respect.

And besides, we are likely to pity the wrong pity. I do not think that Jesus on the cross pitied Pontius Pilate. But I am sure that He pitied the man who spat upon Him, and the crowds that wanted to make Him a king, and the nine lepers who did not return to give thanks.

And there were some people whom Jesus did not pity at all, but despised. There is no pity in the twenty-third chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel—the most biting denunciation which ever fell from the lips of man: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!" You do not pity a man whom you call a hypocrite.

God's compassion is not like our self-pity; neither is it that soft emotion which cannot hate the things which men do, and despise the doer of the deed. I admit that it is largely a matter of guesswork when we begin to inquire into the meaning of such a passage as this

which forms our text, but I suspect that we generally guess wrong when we close the Book of Psalms and try to understand the meaning of God's pity by surveying our own hardships and the tragedies of life. The Psalmist himself adds an illuminating word, for in the next verse he says: "For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust."

Let us try to understand what the Psalmist means.

I

From the beginning of time, men have thought that they knew their frame; and, generally speaking, they have thought well of it. There are limitations for which self-sufficient people would be willing to receive the pity of God who made us; but not many among those we call efficient people will concede that there is anything helpless and wretched about our very frame—the stuff that goes into the making of our wills, our brains, our hearts. Certainly the great ones of earth, the statesmen, empire-builders, appear to think well of men's native ability to run this universe creditably and handle the destiny of the race. They not

infrequently resent God's intrusion in practical matters.

They have a large confidence in their own programmes, their plots, their schemes of salvation. The frame of men, they think, is infinitely potential, even sublime—if you select the right man.

Gibbon one day in the year 1764 sat at eventide among the ruins of the Capitol at Rome, meditating on the tragedy and the mystery of the rise and fall of civilizations. At that hour he decided to write his great book. A competent critic has justly, I think, observed that Gibbon did not go one inch forward in explaining why the great thing builded by great men's hands tottered and fell so pitiably. I suspect that all through those majestic centuries God was pitying the towering geniuses who were making that dazzling thing that has made Rome a word of awe and mystery. Their frames were dust.

Napoleon? Should God pity him, for knowing his frame? Who ought to have been pitied more? For the greater a man's opportunity to stamp the world with his purpose, the more pitiably appears his weakness. Gouverneur Morris called Napoleon the biggest mounte-

bank and rascal that ever held the reins of power. Another exalts him to a place among the gods. The truth lies between. I do not think that Jesus would have been more awe-struck before Napoleon than He was before Pontius Pilate.

There are hours in the history of the world when gentle spirits have felt the pathos that was in the Psalmist's mind—the utter inadequacy of the frame of men to carry the burden of the world. Some of you, perhaps, have read some of those touching letters in Dill's great books of the fifth century of our era,—letters written by people who possessed a culture as sensitive as ours. They looked out from their countryside in Southern France and Northern Italy and beheld a world tottering to a fall,—the roofs and rafters tumbling about their very heads. They might escape the final catastrophe, but their hearts were heavy over what their children might live to see. And in those letters we find this minor note of the impotency of man's mind, or will, in the presence of the overpowering forces of history. They were coming to know their frame, the dust of which they were made.

If any of us ever nursed any illusions that

men are able creditably to manage the affairs of earth, let him meditate on the last decade of the history of this planet. It would seem to be irreverent presumption to attempt to suggest how the thing must look to God; but, when for nearly two hundred years He has been watching men, women, and children, agonizing, bullying one another, overreaching one another, building magnificently a great industrial civilization; when God has watched the upbuilding of this industrial machine and seen the greed, the tinselled luxury grow, and the lust for markets grow, and the plots, the lies of one nation against another, until the helpless peoples who had no quarrel one with another, no reason to hate one another, were led by the men who manage this world into the shambles,—how He must have pitied us.

We have in the Gospel two illuminating instances that bear on this theme. One day Jesus was walking through the countryside of Galilee, followed by increasing crowds of curious and yearning folk. They wanted all sorts of things. Some of them thought they knew what their lean souls required for sustenance. Expectation with some of them ran riot, for a miracle-man was in their midst. And Jesus

suddenly turns and casts His eyes over the multitude, and we are told that He pitied them. Why? Because they were sick and poor? Not chiefly. Because they were like an unshepherded flock, running pellmell hither and thither without guidance and without reason. He saw that the whole frame of their lives was inadequate to bear the strain put upon it: He saw the beauty there that died before it blossomed.

And again, in the last week of His life, as He was approaching the city of Jerusalem, He stood on a hill overlooking the Holy City and He wept. I wonder if we have estimated that scene at its worth. Jesus was not a sentimentalist. He was not given to tears over humanity like a Rousseau. I do not think that He really loved Jerusalem. It was not His home or His native place. Its rules, its people were not His kind of rules, His kind of people. The priests and rulers had missed utterly what to Him seemed to be the meaning of life.

But those are very significant words which the Gospels record that He spoke at that moment: "If thou hadst known the things which belong unto thy peace." How many times He must have said those words over other cities,

other nations, other homes, other individuals.

"If thou hadst known the things which belong unto thy peace." And later, in pronouncing the doom of Capernaum and Bethsaida, He lifted up His eyes and made that astounding prayer: "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes."

There is the heart and the kernel of the matter.

II

Not to live pitiously is at least one of the purposes of a generous culture and of religion. Suppose that we acknowledge that to be one of the tests of reasonable Christian life, of a cultivated home. Suppose we say that purpose over and over again, so that all the will that God gave us, fortified by His grace, may go into the making of a life that shall not be too pitiable in God's sight. Where does such a mission lead us? Well, I am of the opinion that it would not get us very far, if it led us to the newspapers, or to the men we cast our votes for to rule us, or to our industrial leaders,

or our labour leaders, for a law to live by. Certainly not to our diplomats.

Let us pass that problem by. Fortunately, our responsibility for running the world is not large. What we can do, and what our professed religion expects of us, is that we should not make such a pitiable failure of our own happiness, our own homes, as the world at large is making of its peace and dignity at this hour. America, Europe may not know the things which belong unto their peace, but we do know what belong to ours. We are pledged to teach them to our children—to ask God's forgiveness when we are disloyal, and to try, and try and try again, to square our living with that dream of beauty God one day set in our souls.

When I think of God's pity for men, there comes to my mind a refrain from the familiar poem, *Reading Gaol*. You remember it runs:

For all men kill the thing they love.

That is the pitiable fact in life. Patriotism, for example, is accounted justly a virtue. But how many things it has killed that patriots love—honour, kindness, justice, peace.

Industry is accounted good. But do you

know the history of those bitter years when the industrialism of the last century was getting embedded in English civilization, when the pious iron masters and mill magnates of Leeds and Bradford poured out their money for foreign missions and the abolition of the slave trade, while they fought, in Parliament and the press, for the right to continue to employ little children of six years old in their mines, crawling on all fours, half-naked, dragging carts of coal by ropes around their tender bodies? They were not bad men, either. They thought they were benefiting England. But they were killing the thing they really loved—the Holy Spirit in the souls of some of their fellow men. God must have pitied the children of that awful age on which was laid the foundations of our industrial prosperity; but I think He pitied the iron masters more.

Henry Adams closed his terrible book on Education with a very solemn reflection. "Perhaps," he wrote, speaking of some future time, "if it were granted us to return to this planet, for the first time since man walked the earth we should find a world that sensitive and timid natures could regard without a shudder."

We are reading, in article after article, in

our popular literature the same opinion,—that our civilization is really killing most of the things we love—reverence, simplicity, contentment of mind, beautiful things to see and to use, work for the love of work and the joy of creation.

One conviction bearing on this theme was phrased by a woman who gave her life for her ideal of duty. Most of us have read the wonderful words which Edith Cavell wrote shortly before she died. But one sentence in that farewell message has pretty well escaped the attention of the world. It was the sentence we most needed to heed, for it held more tragic meaning than all the rest:

“Patriotism,” she wrote, as she stood on the threshold of God’s house, “is not enough.”

“Not enough,” I hear the Christ say to each new device for bringing happiness into our common life. Patriotism is not enough. The economic law is not enough. God knows that money and power are not enough. Nothing, nothing is enough for immortal souls who dream that one day they will live for ever and ever as brothers of Christ in the joy of God’s eternity; nothing but the life that Jesus tried and St. Francis made his pattern.

The Encyclical Letters signed by two hundred and fifty-two bishops at Lambeth, after reviewing the issues of the hour with which religion must deal, after citing the frailty of man's mind in the presence of a world full of trouble and perplexity, of fear and despair, of disconnected effort and aimless exertion, closes with these words: "If in simplicity we give ourselves to Him, He will work with us beyond our understanding."

If, indeed, we live in fear and love of Him, even for our failures of mind and will, we shall win such pity as a father giveth his children. May God give such grace to our weak frames that in passing through things temporal, we finally lose not the things eternal.

THE END

GRACE CHVRCH AND OLD NEW YORK

BY
William Rhinelanders Stewart

Illustrated

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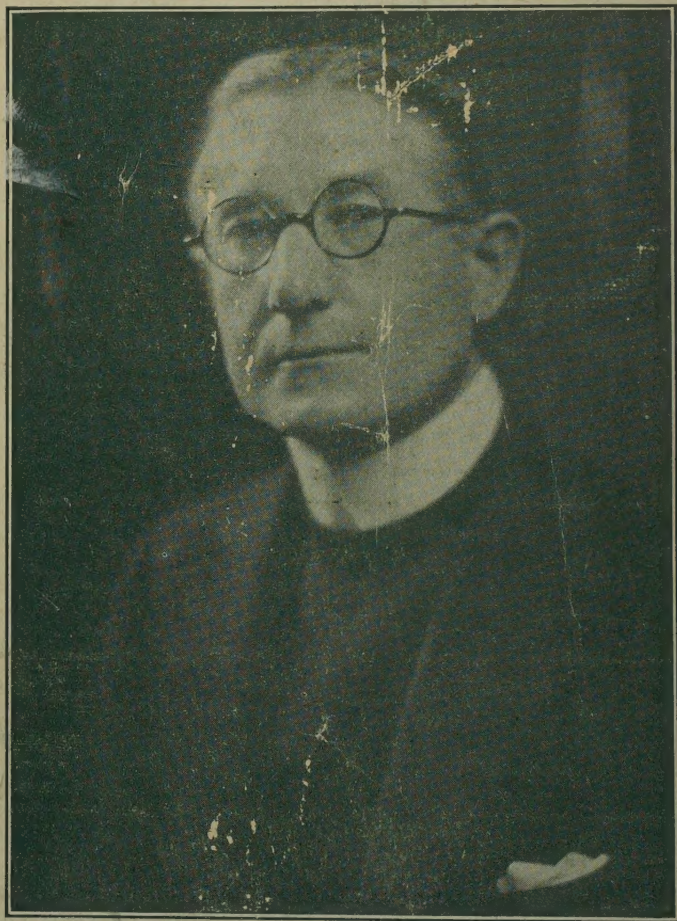
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WILLIAM AUSTIN SMITH

A SKETCH

By CHARLES LEWIS SLATTERY

Illustrated by Nine Essays of DR. SMITH



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WILLIAM AUSTIN SMITH

"He faced well-nigh insuperable obstacles; he fought hard; and he won a glorious victory"